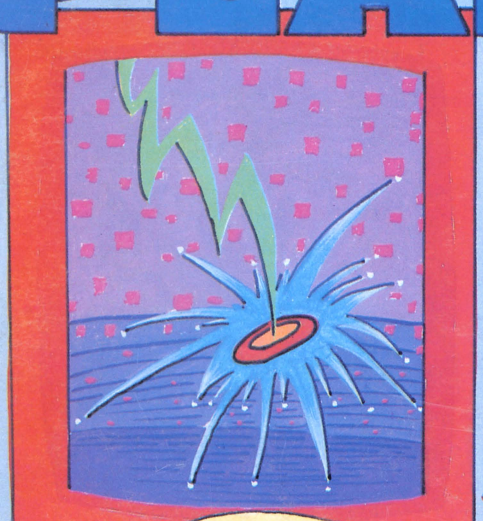
NOVEMBER 1986

PLAY·METER



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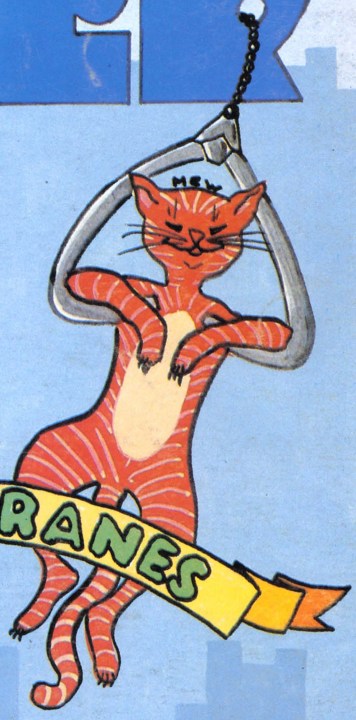

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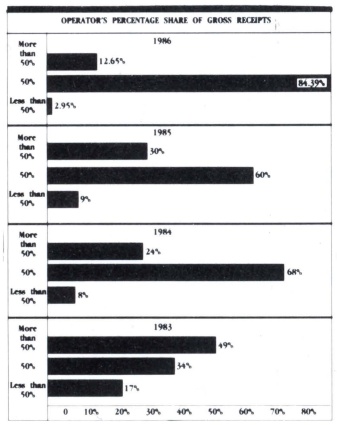
VOL. 12, NO. 20 CONTENTS NOVEMBER 15, 1986



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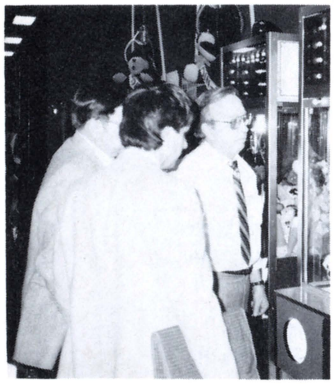

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FEATURES

The state of the industry **20**

Play Meter's annual report on the coin-op amusement industry reveals that while the ranks of operators continued to thin, surviving operators benefitted from improved conditions. Despite a few problems, the industry may be ready to start growing again.

The sparkle is back! **30**

At the AMOA's Expo '86, video-game pioneer Nolan Bushnell commented that the industry's "sparkle is back" with a return of optimism and an atmosphere of fun. Most of the sparkle came from the direction of the numerous merchandiser exhibits, but there were plenty of new games and other equipment to interest the 7,000 who attended the show.

Europe begins exhibition season **59**

Europe recently began its annual season of coin-op exhibitions with the Associated Leisure Preview in London and the ENADA show in Rome. International correspondent David Snook looks at those shows and reports on the status of the coin-machine industry in various European countries.

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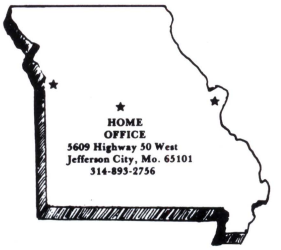

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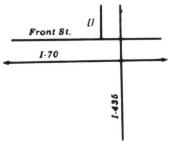

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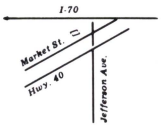

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FOUNDER:
Ralph C. Lally II

PUBLISHER:
Carol P. Lally

EDITOR:
George R. Sigler

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Bonnie Theard
John R. Storbeck

ART DIRECTOR:
Sally Blakemore

GRAPHICS DESIGNER:
Margret Vincent

TECHNICAL WRITER:
Frank Seninsky

CORRESPONDENTS:
Irving L. Blackman
H. Richard Priesmeyer
Jeffrey Rosenthal
Roger C. Sharpe
Mike Shaw
David Snook

DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING/ EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT:
Valerie Cognevich

COMPTROLLER:
John F. Lally III

CIRCULATION MANAGER:
Renee' C. Pierson

ACCOUNTING:
Lenore R. Bramblett

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Operators talking about high prices

Operators at the AMOA show generally were in good spirits and refreshingly optimistic about their futures in the coin-op entertainment business. They seemed confident in their businesses and the industry.

But very few of the operators I talked with did not dwell on the high cost of equipment.

When it introduced *Pole Position*, Atari seemed to open the door for kits costing more than $1,000, and the company began a revival of dedicated games with the success of *Gauntlet*. Gauntlet was expensive, much more than the kits operators had become accustomed to. But it was unique, a one-of-a-kind game to serve as a novelty in special locations.

Sega followed suit with its successful *Hang-On*, which, again, was an expensive novelty video designed for a limited market of special locations.

Not unexpectedly, the trend didn't end with *Hang-On*. The AMOA show abounded in dedicated games, as manufacturers proclaimed their knowledge of what operators want. And they may have read the signals correctly each time an operator bought one of the arcade/novelty games. A special piece obviously was what was wanted. But how many of these expensive arcade machines are too many?

Sega and Konami showed two very expensive games that, after arousing everyone's interest at the Japanese show a few weeks earlier, became the talk of the AMOA. But one of the things most talked about was the price of the games. Both are designed to look like race cars, which prompted one operator to quip that he would just take the same money, buy two Hyundais, and let the kids drive around in a real car.

This line of thinking drove home a point at the show: operators are not about to get back into debt. Many are just now seeing black ink on their company books, and they intend for it to stay that way. While it is certainly true that new, exciting equipment can boost any route, and distributors are wondering why operators are still holding back on buying new games, the prices keep rising.

Comments from distributors and manufacturers at the show clearly indicated that they feel operators are in their best financial position in years. That may be true, but, as the operators say, they are planning to stay in that financial position. There were fewer reasonably priced conversions shown than usual, but those that were got a lot of attention.

I'm not criticizing manufacturers for introducing new product. It's wonderful to see new product with new technology taking its place in the industry. But I think manufacturers should be fanatical about pricing games within operators' range.

As manufacturers and operators have vowed to increase communication and cooperation in the industry, and this subject is heavy on everyone's mind right now, we would like to hear from operators and manufacturers on the subject. The topic would be perfect for the page *Play Meter* has committed each month, at the request of operators at the AMOA's "Press Speaks" seminar, to allow operators to voice their opinions.

Too often operators feel bitter about something but keep it to themselves. This forum will be for you operators and for replies. The operator who suggested it felt strongly that operators would take advantage of the chance to sound off; don't disappoint him or your industry. If you have something on your mind, sit down and put it on paper, or even send us a tape.

We're waiting to hear from you.

Valerie Cognevich

Valerie Cognevich
Advertising Director/Executive Assistant

NEWS

HAWKINS SUCCEEDS MARSH AS AMOA PRESIDENT

Richard Hawkins, president of D&R Novelty, Inc., of Rochester, Minn., has succeeded Al Marsh, president of Hart Novelty Co. of Bellingham, Wash. as president of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA).

Hawkins served this past year as AMOA first vice president and was instrumental in launching the AMOA's National Dart Association. He was elected president at the spring meeting of the AMOA board of directors. His term officially began November 8.

Richard Hawkins

Other 1986-87 officers beginning new terms are Walter Bohrer, Jr., president of Hastings Distributing Inc., of Milwaukee, first vice president; and Jack Kerner, president of Melo-Tone Vending, Inc., of Somerville, Mass., secretary. Clyde Knupp, president of Amuse-O-Matic Co. of Fort Dodge, Iowa, was re-elected treasurer.

In addition, three vice presidents have taken office, and 10 new directors have been elected to the board. Vice presidents are Craig Johnson of Tataka Amusement of Farmington, Utah; James Hayes of Gem Music & Vending Co., Inc., of Dayton, Ohio; and Phillip Eisenberg of Consolidated Vending Co. of Johnstown, Pa.

The 10 directors are Stan Williams of Williams Enterprises, Inc., of Enfield, Ill.; James Thorpe of Thorpe Music Co., Inc., of Rocky Mount, N.C.; Lou Singer of Central Distributing Co.

At NSM's booth at the AMOA show, the company's Russ Strahan (from left) and Ulrich Schulze present Steve Henderson of Operators Distributing of High Point, N.C., with NSM's second-place award for distributor excellence. Receiving the first-place award was Cleveland Coin, and the third-place award went to Sammons-Pennington. The rookie of the year award went to Banner Distributing in Pittsburgh.

As Bob Portale of Prizes! looks on at his company's booth at the AMOA show, Mel Kaufman (right) of Imagination Leisure draws the name of Ken Burgess, Jr., of Top Hat Amusements of Ontario, Canada, as winner of a *Big Choice* crane given away by Prizes!, a manufacturer and distributor of crane prizes. Burgess made news 10 years ago as one of those instrumental in getting pinball legalized in Canada.

of Omaha, Neb.; Frank Seninsky of Alpha-Omega Amusements and Sales of Edison, N.J.; Mel Grossberg of Rowe Corp. of Wyckross, N.J.; R.R. "Whitely" Schroth of Vend-Music Services, Inc., of Hermiston, Ore.; Sharon Harris of Stan Harris & Co. of Philadelphia, Pa.; John Newberry, Jr., of Venco Amusement Co. of Bland, Va.; Ben Dobkin of Dobkin Bros., Inc., of Wheeling, W. Va.; and Doug Gapter of Gapter Amusement Co. of Cheyenne, Wyo.

AWARDS BANQUET HONORS GAMES AND MUSIC

Five amusement-industry game awards and several music awards were presented during the AMOA Expo '86 annual Awards Banquet and Stage Show Nov. 7 in the Regency Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Mrs. Reba Schneller and Stuart Schneller accept The Pioneer Award presented to the late Len Schneller. At right is John Estridge.

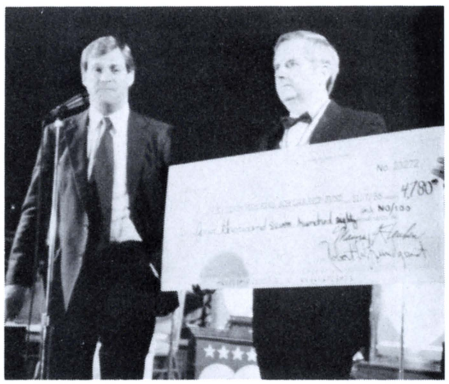
Gauntlet by Atari won as the most-played dedicated video game; *Mat Mania* by Memetron won as the most-played conversion kit; *High Speed* by Williams won as the most-played pinball game; *Cougar Cheyenne* by The Valley Co. won as the most popular pool table; and *Trivia* by Merit Industries won as the most popular other game.

This is the fifth consecutive year that The Valley Co. has won in its category. Charles Milhem, president of The Valley Co., dedicated the award to Dick Shelton, vice president of manufacturing, who is recuperating from heart surgery.

The Pioneer Award honored industry veteran Len Schneller, who died August 18 after a lengthy illness. Schneller's career spanned 50 years, and he is credited with initiating coin-op pool tournaments. Mrs. Reba Schneller and her son Stuart accepted the award in Schneller's name.

The Merit Award was presented to Ed Adlum, publisher of *Replay* magazine, for his contributions to the industry.

During the banquet, two large contributions were made to the Wayne Hesch Memorial Scholarship Fund. Bill Cravens, vice president of sales for Capcom, presented a check for $10,000 to the fund as a result of the company's pledge to donate $10 for every *Speed Rumbler* kit sold.



John Estridge, right, accepts a big check for the Wayne Hesch Fund from Bob Lundquist of Bally Sente.

Bob Lundquist, president of Bally Sente presented a poster-sized check for $4,800 that reflected advance ticket sales to the Bally Midway/Bally Sente-sponsored screenings of the Ed Adlum horror movie "Invasion of the Blood Farmers." The screenings were held the first night of the AMOA show with pre-screening receptions featuring a live Dixieland band and typical movie refreshments.

John Estridge, president of Southern Games, Inc., of Nashville, Tenn., a past president of AMOA, read a letter from Mrs. Beverly Hesch expressing her gratitude to the AMOA for remembering her husband by establishing the fund for worthy college-bound youngsters. Mrs. Hesch donated $3,000 this year and contributed last year. Carolyn Massakowski of Avoca, Pa., sponsored by Roth Novelty, was awarded the 1986-87 scholarship at the banquet.

The Cigarette Vending Machine Promotion Award was presented to R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. for the second year.

Jukebox (JB) awards were presented in the following categories: Best Pop Record, Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love" on the Atlantic label; Best New Artist, Judy Rodman; Best Country Record of the Year, Dan Seals' "Bop" on EMI-America; and Best Soul Record of the Year, Janet Jackson's "What Have You Done for Me Lately?" on the A&M label.

All awards are voted on by AMOA members. In the jukebox and games categories, winners reflect top revenue producers from July 1, 1985 through June 30, 1986. Bill Stone of Stone Amusement of Tullahoma, Tenn., was awards master of ceremonies, and John Estridge handled presentations.

Following the awards, AMOA members enjoyed a floor show featuring Judy Rodman and the singing group, "The Girls Next Door" before dancing to the big-band sound of Bo Thorpe and his orchestra.

WINNERS OF WAYNE E. HESCH RAFFLE

Southland Vending, S&S Amusements, Amuso Matic, Cloverleaf Miniature Golf, and Venco Corporation were the five grand-prize winners announced for the Wayne E. Hesch Scholarship Foundation Raffle held at the AMOA show. As the winner of Grand Prize #1, Southland Vending took home a Rock-Ola *Nostalgia* Jukebox, a Valley pool table, a Nintendo *PlayChoice-10*, an Arachnid *English Mark Darts* game, and an SMS Manufacturing bingo

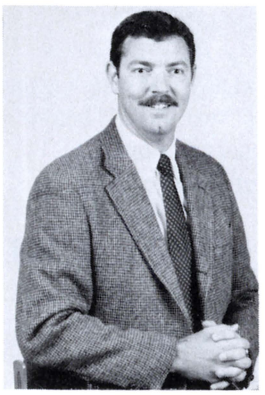
R.A. Green announces one of the winners of the Wayne E. Hesch Scholarship Foundation Raffle at the AMOA show.

game. The other grand prize winners received similar prizes.

Twenty-five other ticket-holders took home prizes. The raffle raised more than $72,000 for the Hesch Scholarship Foundation.

TAYLOR NEW ATARI SALES VP, BREAKS RETURNS TO U.K.

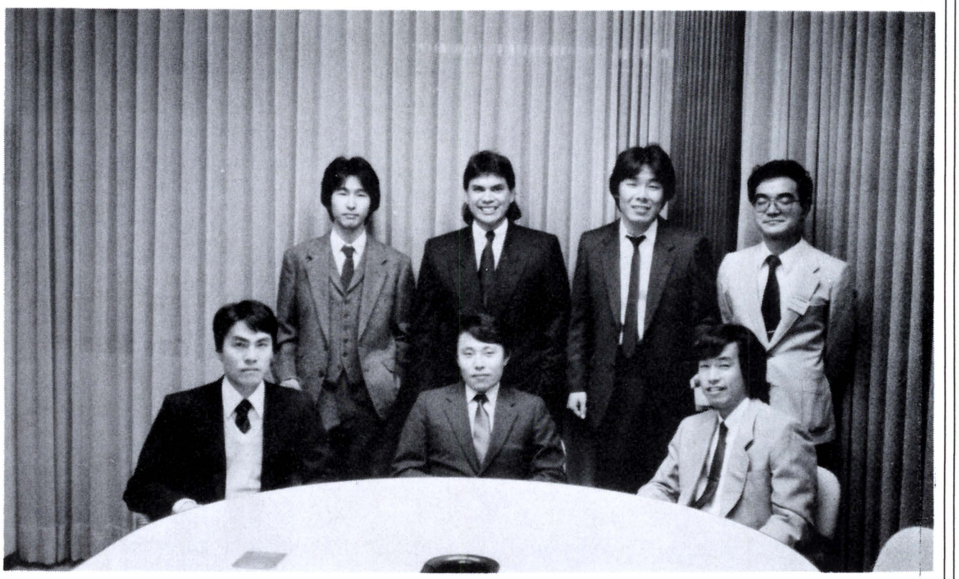
Michael C. Taylor has been appointed vice president of sales for Atari Games Corporation. Taylor replaces Shane Breaks, who has returned to his native England to take responsibility for Atari's European sales. Breaks will work in conjunction with David Smith out of Atari's London office.



Michael Taylor

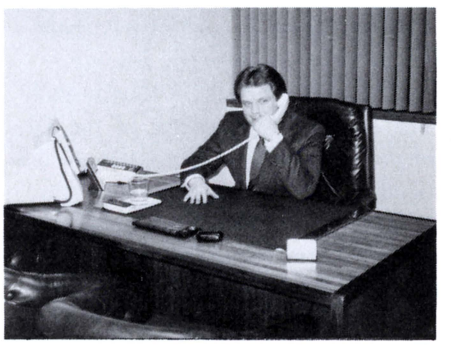
Before coming to Atari, Taylor worked as OEM marketing manager for Ryan-McFarland Corporation, a computer-compiler manufacturer in Southern California. His accounts there included IBM, AT&T, and Hewlett-Packard. Taylor brings more than 13 years of computer-industry sales experience with him.

KONAMI HOSTS RECEPTION AT NEW FACILITY



Konamo staff members gather in the new conference room.

Fumiharo Hishikawa (right) chairman of Konami Japan, and Kiyoshi Mizumaki.



Frank Bundra, Konami vice president. in his new office.

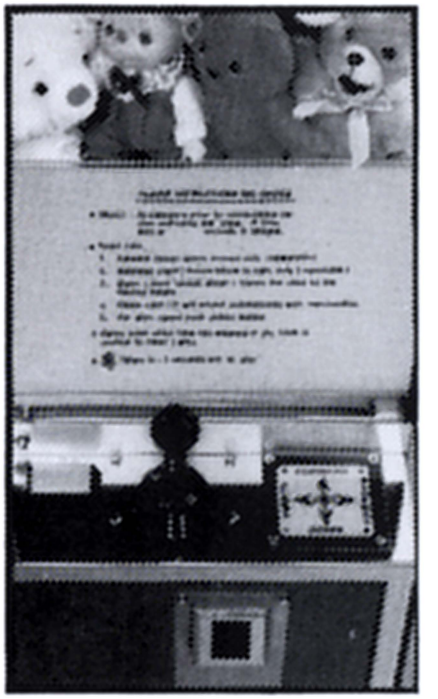
Konami, Inc., hosted a reception for AMOA attendees at its new office and warehouse in Wood Dale, Ill., the first night of the AMOA show.

Charter buses took guests from the Hyatt Regency to the new 25,000-square-foot facility that includes executive offices, a conference room, a large warehouse, and a gym for employees.

In addition to showing off its expanded facility, Konami formally introduced its new driving game *WEC LeMans.*

Fumiharo Hishikawa, chairman of Konami's Japanese parent company, accepted the Wood Dale city flag from the mayor, who welcomed Konami to the Wood Dale business community and thanked the company for locating its offices in the Chicago suburb. Ben Har-El, president of Konami, introduced Todd Miles, assistant to the Illinois governor, who extended the governor's thanks and good wishes.

Staff members welcoming visitors included Har-El, Frank Bundra, Steve Kaufman, and Frank Pelligrini. The reception featured a band and a buffet.



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Konami employees Kurt Sedlacek and Wendy Atherton in the lobby of Konami's new offices.

Tim Paukner (left) and Gary Gouse of Birmingham Vending at the Konami reception.

Konami is known for its conversion kits, but the expanded facility and new dedicated driving game indicate a move toward a broader product line and more in-house development with a U.S.-resident research-and-development staff.

Konami of Japan, which was founded 18 years ago, also recently moved to larger offices in an 11-story building in Japan. The U.S. company located in Los Angeles in 1982 and moved to Illinois in 1984.

Construction of the Wood Dale facility began last fall, and Konami moved in this September. The new address and telephone number are 815 Mittel Drive, Wood Dale, IL 60191; (312) 595-1443.

CITY OF HOPE HONORS LOCKHART

The Chicago Electronics Council for the City of Hope presented the City of Hope Spirit of Life Award to Bette Lockhart, executive vice president of Rock-Ola Manufacturing Corp., at a testimonial banquet November 5 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Chicago. The Spirit of Life Award dinner honors a leader who has made contributions to his own industry and supported the work of the City of Hope, a research hospital in California that is a major cancer-research center and leader in bone-marrow transplants. Lockhart has devoted six years to the cause of the City of Hope.

Bette Lockhart

All proceeds from the dinner and the program book published for the event will be donated to the research hospital.

JAMMA RECOMMENDS ANTI-INFRINGEMENT ACTIONS

The Japanese Amusement Machinery Manufacturers Association (JAMMA), in response to American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) proposals, has agreed to recommend to its members that they emboss the name and corporate trademark of the legitimate U.S. copyright holder on all game boards intended for shipment to the U.S.

JAMMA also has agreed to recommend that Japanese software for boards intended for use in Japan include a warning message on the video screen that would read: "This game illegal for use in the U.S.A."

JAMMA's agreement to make the recommendations to its members came at an October 6 meeting in Tokyo of the boards of directors of JAMMA and AAMA to discuss means of combating video-game copyright infringement and trademark violation.

The JAMMA board also agreed to consider recommending that the release of games in Japan be delayed for 90 days after release in the United States.

The AAMA board suggested that, because of the lack of safeguards against the production of counterfeit boards in South Korea, Japanese manufacturers avoid using South Korean subcontractors or licensees.

JAMMA officials, however, explained that existing, but little-known, South Korean laws are being used by the association's copyright committee to impede counterfeit production in Seoul. They said South Korean authorities have seized evidence in raids conducted as a result of JAMMA's initiative and that further actions are expected.

A joint contingent of AAMA and JAMMA officials will meet with law-enforcement authorities in Seoul to discuss South Korean counterfeiting.

AAMA URGES USE OF "HOLD HARMLESS" LETTERS

In an effort to stamp out counterfeit and illegally distributed games, the AAMA is urging operators to insist on "hold harmless" letters or statements when they purchase machines from their suppliers. Such letters or statements, according to a November 14 press release, would shift the responsibility for copyright compliance to the seller.

The AAMA has developed "hold harmless" statements for the manufacturer-to-distributor sale and for the distributor-to-operator sale. The statements are available on rubber stamps, which can be used to mark sales invoices. The cost of the stamp is $50 (for AAMA members, $25).

For more information, write AAMA, 205 The Strand, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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NEWS

COIN-OP FIRMS EXHIBIT AT C-STORE CONVENTION

Coin machines were among products exhibited at the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) convention and trade show at the New Orleans Convention Center November 2-5. Over 500 companies, most of them with food-service equipment, exhibited at the show.

Coin-operated equipment on display included video and pinball from Bally Manufacturing, cranes from Grayhound Electronics, countertop trivia from M. Kramer Manufacturing, and specialty equipment from Air-Vend, Air Check, and L.M. Becker & Co.

Bally representatives Jolly Backer and Tom Locke demonstrated Bally Sente's *Night Stocker* video and Bally Midway's *Rampage* video and *Special Force* pinball.

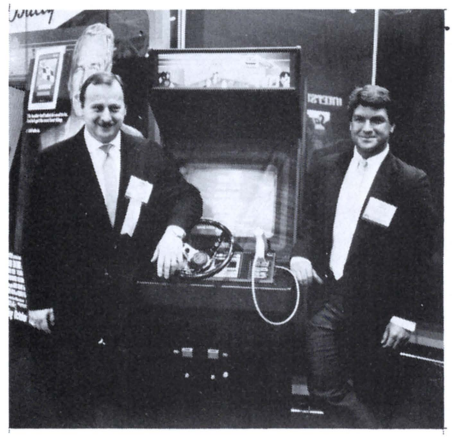
"The majority of convenience store owners who came by weren't happy with the way their video games were looking or collecting," said Backer. "Many said they had not talked to an operator in months. They claimed the equipment was so old they knew why their collections were down.

"Some store owners said operators were paying attention to their locations. If equipment is maintained properly everyone will be satisfied and videos will be a positive experience. Rotation and fresh equipment are the answer. Some filler games can still be new."

According to the *Convenience Store News* Industry Report for 1986, there are 66,000 C-stores with a total industry volume of $61.6 billion, a large market for coin-op equipment.

Grayhound Electronics' Dan Dinnebeil demonstrated the *Skill Crane* and *The Parrot* merchandiser. M. Kramer Manufacturing displayed its *LA Trivia Challenge* countertop.

David Fulton and James Carlson of Air Check exhibited *Retrac -A- Hose.* Air-Vend's Jerry Sullivan, Joe Ennis, and Bruce Childs manned a booth of air, water, and tire-inflating



Tom Locke (left) and Jolly Backer show Bally Sente's *Night Stocker.*

Air-Vend representatives at the C-store show include (from left) Jerry Sullivan, Joe Ennis, and Bruce Childs.

David Fulton (left) and James Carlson show Air Check equipment.

Grayhound exhibited its *Skill Crane* and *The Parrot.*

M. Kramer's *LA Trivia Challenge* draws interest.

Don DeVale of IDEA and Ulli Kunnecke of NSM (bottom, from left) pose with the German and American teams after the Royal Dartes Lowen Cup Tournament in Bingen, West Germany.

men's singles; and Sheila Bins and Gary Scanlon, both of Green Bay, Wis., the mixed doubles. IDEA's Don and Bonnie DeVale accompanied the team.

AMOA TO HOLD GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS CONFERENCE

The AMOA has announced May 11-13 as the dates for its 1987 Government Affairs Conference. To be held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., the conference will include a new workshop on how to deal effectively with officials and regulators at the state and federal levels. Additional information will be mailed to association members early in 1987.

STATUS PLANS ELECTRONIC CASINO

Status Game Corporation has announced plans to open an "electronic" gambling casino in a shopping mall plaza in a Las Vegas suburb. The casino will reside in a 12,000-square-foot building whose construction is scheduled to begin December 1. with occupancy set for mid-1987.

The casino will have approximately 350 gaming machines, including electronic versions of poker, blackjack, keno, craps, and bingo. All of the games will be computerized, with video or laser-disc simulations of real games.

Status, which is licensed to manufacture and sell its machines in Nevada, has an application for a similar license pending in Atlantic City. The new casino's electronic gambling machines will be made at the company's manufacturing plant in Las Vegas.

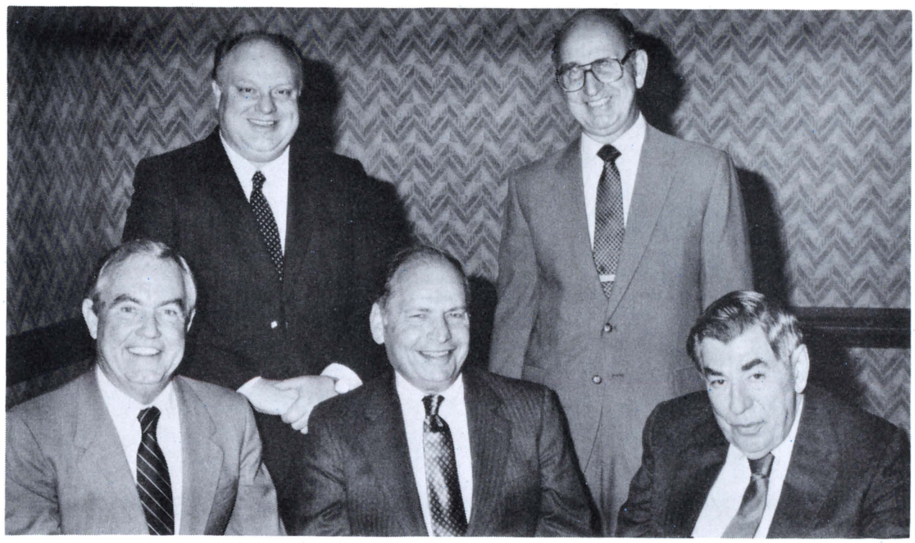
Status also has declared a 10-percent dividend payable to shareholders of record on December 1, 1986. The dividend is applicable to the company's 2,981,634 shares of common stock and 895,280 warrants currently outstanding. The warrant exercise price will be reduced by 10 percent as a result of the dividend.

NOSTALGIA JUKEBOX FEATURED AT ATLAS SHOW

Rock-Ola's *Nostalgia* phonograph, whose 50s-style exterior surrounds essentially the same workings as its *Super Sound II*, was the feature attraction at a show sponsored by Atlas Distributing, Inc., and held October 20 at the Zum Deutschen Eck restaurant in Chicago. Displayed in the restaurant's banquet hall, the unit was shown for the first time in the Chicago area to 150 of the area's largest phonograph operators.

Rock-Ola's director of engineering, Shuja Haque, demonstrated the 160-selection unit and answered questions from the audience. Following a buffet, a Rock-Ola *490* jukebox was given away as the grand prize in a drawing.

According to Jerry Marcus, Atlas' president, the distributor has sold "quite a few" *Nostalgias* since the showing.



NAMA's 1987 officers include (seated, from left) William K. Walsh, senior vice chairman; Merril Krakauer, chairman, and G. Richard Schreiber, NAMA president. Standing (from left) are John R. Farquharson, vice chairman, and Harold I. Blotner, treasurer.

NAMA SHOW SETS RECORDS, OFFICERS ELECTED

A total of 8,058 vending-industry members signed in at the 50th Anniversary Convention-Exhibit of Vending and Foodservice Management, held October 23-26 at Chicago's McCormick Place.

According to the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA), sponsors of the convention, attendance was the highest since 1971, when 8,357

registered. The 229 exhibitors occupied 61,850 square feet of floor space.

The convention marked the 50th anniversary of NAMA's founding and, with the first U.S. patents for vending machines issued in 1886, the centennial of the American vending industry.

The keynote speaker was Henry Kissinger. U.S. Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, an architect of the 1986 tax legislation, also spoke.

Merrill Krakauer, chairman of the board of Whippany, N.J.-based Rowe International, Inc., was elected chairman of NAMA's board of directors and will succeed James Rost, executive vice president of Canteen Corporation, effective January 1.

Other new NAMA officers include William K. Walsh, senior vice chairman; John R. Farquharson, vice chairman; and Harold I. Blotner, treasurer .

Newly elected to the board were Benny Balle Jensen of Wittenborg, USA, of Atlanta and Mark Pickett of Pickett Food Service of Shreveport, La. Re-elected were Theodore Alpert, William Buckholz, and David Clayton.

Each member will serve on the board for three years, beginning January 1.

BALLY AND EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTORS MEET

Sales strategies in the European market were the topic of a September 26-28 meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, between European distributors and representatives of Bally Midway and Bally Sente.

Combining market analyses and product previews, the three-day session saw the introduction of Bally Midway's video game *Rampage* and its *Special Force* pinball. Bob Lundquist, Sente president, introduced *Spiker*, the video game with a California beach atmosphere, and *Night Stocker*, the new combination driving/shooting video.

Roger Keesee, Bally Manufacturing's chief operating officer (from left), talks with Bally Wulff representatives Karl Hundhausen and Dieter Bethke.

WILLIAMS ELECTRONICS DIVESTS JOINT VENTURE

Williams Electronics, Inc., has sold its entire interest in its joint venture in the television and music businesses for an amount equal to its net investment in the venture. The interest went to Williams' joint-venture partner, an entity controlled by Charles A. Koppelman and Martin Bandier. Koppelman resigned as a Williams director before the sale.

PLAY CHOICE-10 GETS NEW FRONT-PLEX KIT

Nintendo has developed a retrofit modification kit for the *PlayChoice-10* front-plex. Because the existing front-plex is easily scratched with the gun attachment, the kit includes tempered glass.

The kit includes two pieces of glass, one middle mounting bracket, mounting screws, and instructions. It is available through authorized Nintendo distributors.

All *PlayChoice-10* systems shipped since November 1 have included tempered glass.

SUNN AMUSEMENT GETS NEW ADDRESS

In compliance with county address changes made for the 911 emergency code that's being implemented throughout central Florida, Sunn Amusement Distributing has been given a new address: Sunn Amusement Distributing, Inc., 624 Douglas Avenue, Suite 1412, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714.

"We're in the same facility, just a new address," Bill Medvetz, Sunn's president, said.

BALLY MIDWAY APPOINTS HEIDEL

Raymond J. Heidel has joined Bally Midway as manager of electrical engineering. Heidel came to Bally from Nuvatec, Inc., a design-and-consulting firm that specializes in microprocessor applications. Before that, he was at Taito Corporation.

In his new position, Heidel will help design the electronics for Bally's pinballs, video games, and health-and-fitness products.

AAMA ATTRACTS NEW MEMBERS

The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) gained 10 new members during a special luncheon held for distributors during the AMOA show, a figure that increases its distributor membership to 31.

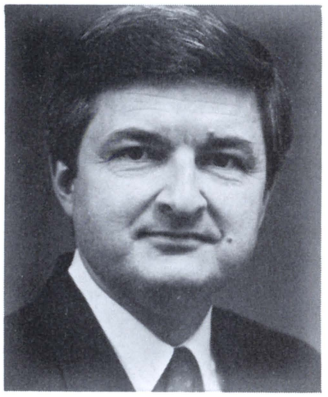
The new members are Active Amusement Distributors, AMA Distributors, Audio Visual Amusements, Belam Southeast Distributing Corp., Hanson Distributing, Mountain Coin, Rowe International, State Sales & Service Corp., Struve Distributing Co., and T.O.P. Distributing Co.

In remarks to the group, Maury Ferchen, AAMA president, stressed that manufacturers and distributors have common problems, among them the

need to bolster amusement-machine play and the number of players. David Weaver, the association's executive vice president, reported on an array of topics including public relations, government relations, technical representation, industry statistics, and market development. Bob Fay, director of industry affairs and enforcement, spoke on copyright and trademark law.

WEAVER EARNS CAE DESIGNATION

David A. Weaver, executive vice president of the American Amusement Machine Association,



David Weaver

has received the Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation from the American Society of Association Executives. Candidates for the designation are considered on the basis of their experience and accomplishments in association management. They must have either five years of experience as an association executive or three years experience as a chief staff executive. CAE designation is considered an indication of leadership skill, activity in community affairs, and expertise in specific areas of association management. About 1,300 association executives have been certified thus far.

Weaver, who was certified in September, was one of 35 persons to earn the designation in 1986.

TIFFANY TELECOM, HARRIS REACH AGREEMENT

Tiffany Telecom, Inc., of North Dakota and Harris Communication of Colorado have agreed to the terms of a joint venture that involves the vending of 200 Tiffany phone units, according to Tiffany.

The agreement calls for Tiffany to furnish at a discount 100 HT-4500 "ultra smart" units and 100 *Table Talk Plus* units. Harris will install and operate the equipment.

Installation of the units began on November 1 and was to be completed by December 15.

Tiffany is negotiating with six other firms for similar agreements.

Tiffany also has announced that it has produced two complete retrofit kits for use with either GTE or Western cases. The B-4500 kit is a basic pre-pay board with 5-band answer supervision, rates chip, and voice instruction. The B-4550 kit has expanded rates and an optional watch chip and uses all existing wire in a GTE or Western case.

INTERMARK ACQUIRES SUMMIT ASSETS, IMAGINEERING

Intermark Gaming International, Inc., has concluded an agreement with Wales-based gaming manufacturer and marketer Summit Technology, Ltd., in which it has acquired "substantially all of the assets of Summit," according to Intermark.

Under the terms of the agreement, the acquisition covers Summit's manufacturing machinery and equipment, its gaming-device inventory, and all patents and other proprietary rights. Summit's product line encompasses more than 50 varieties of gaming machines and computerized machine-management control systems.

According to John L. Walsh, Intermark's chairman and president, the purchase price for Summit's assets was approximately $400,000. Intermark plans to use the Wales facilities to continue producing and marketing the products it acquired from Summit.

Intermark also has announced the acquisition of Imagineering Industries, Inc., a Reno, Nev.-based company that designs and manufactures computerized Keno operations and accounting systems. Imagineering has Keno installations in more than 60 Reno casinos, including Harrah's. Six other Nevada casinos, in Lake Tahoe, Las Vegas, Sparks, and Reno, have contracted to install Imagineering's Keno systems.

Earlier in the month, Intermark announced a three-for-two split in its common stock (NASDAQ: IGII).

NATIONAL, DSI TO COMBINE

National Pay Telephone Corp. and Dynamic Sciences, Inc., (DSI) have completed the first phase of a transaction to combine the two companies.

National has acquired preferred stock that can be converted into 50.1 percent of common stock in DSI, a California-based manufacturer and developer of high-performance radio-frequency communications and other related equipment primarily sold to government agencies in the U.S. and NATO counties.

When the merger is completed the combined companies are expected to have a net worth of about $8 million and annual sales of $13 million.

The second phase of the transaction includes the exchange of privately held shares in DSI for a new Series B of voting convertible preferred stock in National. These securities would be converted at a rate of 16 2/3 percent every six months beginning January 1, 1987. When fully converted, they would represent approximately 62.5 percent of common stock in National and would neither pay nor accrue dividends for three years.

Phillip Hammond, chairman of the board, and John Spence, president of DSI, have been added to the board of directors of National.

Operators fewer, but happier

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY VITAL STATISTICS

	1986	1985	1984	1983
GROSS COLLECTIONS	$4.0 BILLION	$4.5 BILLION	$4.5 BILLION	$6.4 BILLION
WEEKLY GROSS PER VIDEO GAME	$57	$57	$53	$70
OPERATOR POPULATION	4,500	6,000	9,000	11,000
GAMES ON LOCATION	1,450,000	1,500,741	1,652,324	1,876,389
LOCATIONS	350,000	293,392	378,464	417,267
NEW GAME PURCHASES	255,000	233,150	260,324	363,752

BY GEORGE SIGLER

Hundreds of operators participated in *Play Meter*'s 1986 survey of the coin-operated amusement industry. Because of their much-appreciated willingness to help by filling out a detailed eight-page form, this year's survey results may be the most comprehensive and reliable we've ever obtained.

As with past *Play Meter* industry reports, this one carries the date of the current year. It deals specifically, however, with the 12-month period from August 1985 through July 1986. Survey forms, prepared under the supervision of Dr. H. Richard Priesmeyer of the management-consulting firm of Priesmeyer & Associates, were mailed to operator-subscribers in August. They were returned to *Play Meter* in September and forwarded to Dr. Priesmeyer, who analyzed the results. The sample size was large; in fact, it was substantially larger than necessary for the survey results to be valid.

Nevertheless, there is a margin for error in the results, and we emphasize that it would be unfair for any government body or taxing authority to use the results for any legislative purpose. Such use of the survey would be wrongful.

TRENDS

The survey indicates that while the post-1982 industry shake-out continued in 1986 with a decline in the number of operators and gross collections, it was a better year than 1985 for remaining operators. It's important to recognize that the decline in the number of operators the past few years has been greater relative to the decline in gross collections.

Gross collections in 1986 totaled approximately $4 billion, compared with $6.4 billion in 1983; that's a 37.5-percent drop. But operator population since 1983 has declined nearly 60 percent.

To understand what that means, consider this: if all collections were divided evenly among operators, collections per operator in 1983 would have been about $546,000; in 1984 about $500,000; in 1985 about 750,000; and in 1986 about $889,000. In other words, the pie may be smaller, but the people sitting at the

table are getting more to eat.

Statistics illustrate the trend. For example, the percentage of medium and large operators, those whose routes include more than 75 pieces of equipment, increased from 63 percent in 1985 to 70 percent in 1986 (only 40 percent of operators fit that classification in 1983). Almost all operators (more than 99 percent) have been in the business more than a year. A third of all operators faced less competition in 1986 than in 1985. Nearly half of all street operators (more than 46 percent) increased the number of their locations in 1986; fewer than 27 percent reduced the number (the number of locations increased almost 19 percent).

Perhaps the most telling statistics have to do with operator attitudes, because they indicate that the operators who have remained in the industry are glad they have. Most operators (69 percent) are more confident about the industry now than a year ago. Most (61 percent) expect both their gross collections and profits to increase in the coming year. A majority (54 percent) considers the current state of the industry either "good" or "great," and only 13 percent consider the current state "poor."

Obviously, there aren't many operators left who are worried about making it through another year. And if there is a decrease in the number of operators in 1987, that decrease will be small. It could be that the number will increase for the first time in five years or so.

Remaining operators are healthier than they have been in some time, but they certainly are not without problems. While the prices of new games have risen, games overall have been grossing about the same amount per machine for the past three years. In addition, gross-receipts or sales taxes as well as machine-license fees have become more prevalent and at higher rates.

EQUIPMENT

Some 255,000 new games were bought in 1986, about 8.5 percent more than the previous year, but there were about 50,000 fewer pieces of equipment on location. Operators report that on the average nearly 12 percent of their equipment is not on location.

As in 1985, video games make up about two-thirds of all equipment on location and about the same proportion of new machines bought (68 percent). More than 64 percent of the video-game operators bought about the same number or fewer videos than in 1985.

OPERATOR POPULATION	
Street	41.55
Mixed	42.96
Arcade	15.49
Total	100.0

It's impossible to determine from the survey what percentage of new videos bought were counterfeit or parallel imports, but there was some evidence that a significant number of such games were bought. In one case, for example, one third of all the sales of a game were in kit form, but the game was sold legitimately only in dedicated form.

Average weekly gross collections for videos remained about the same as in 1985 at $57.50, $4.50 more than in 1983, but $12.50 less than in 1983. The average weekly cost of operating videos was $8.39.

Pinballs represented about 10 percent of games on location and 11 percent of new games bought. The survey indicates operators continued to jump on the pinball bandwagon in 1986. Of those who operate pins, 52.5 percent bought more this year than last; only 21.3 percent said they bought fewer. While the average weekly gross for pinballs of $51.20 was about the same as last year, the figure still was substantially higher than in 1984 ($41) or 1983 ($38). The average weekly cost of operating was $11.13

Jukeboxes, representing 8.6 percent of equipment on location but less than six percent of new machines bought, had an average weekly gross of $54.50, a 16 percent increase compared with 1985. The figure is close to the high ($55 in 1981) for phonographs over the past nine years. Average weekly operating costs were reported at $9.93.

1986 SUBSCRIBER POLL GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESPONSES BY REGION	
Region	%
South	34.4
West	25.8
Central	22.9
Northeast	16.9
Total	100.0

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESPONSES BY STATE	
State	%
California	12.5
Florida	5.7
Illinois	5.7
Pennsylvania	5.4
Texas	5.0
New York	4.7
Michigan	3.9
New Jersey	3.6
South Carolina	3.6
All others	49.9
Total	100.0

NOTE:All states and Puerto Rico represented except Alaska, Washington, D.C., Kentucky, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wyoming.

Average gross collections for pool tables increased also, from $58 to nearly $61. Over the past nine years, pool tables have an average weekly gross of more than $60. Pool tables account for nearly six percent of games on location and nearly five percent of new game sales. Pool-table operating costs averaged $7.90.

Although 1986 is the first year the survey has produced statistics on merchandisers, so there are no figures for comparison from previous years, the increasing popularity of the equipment is evident. More than 40 percent of all operators have merchandisers or some kind of redemption equipment on location. Crane and rotary merchandisers now make up about three percent of games on location and about four percent of new-machine sales. An indication of the trend toward merchandisers is that more than 58 percent of those who operate merchandisers bought more of the machines this year than in 1985. Here's another impressive statistic: 54 percent of those operators saw average weekly grosses of more than $150. That's a hefty sum, even considering inventory and operating costs, which were reported at $41.12 a week.

Electronic dart games were a little less than three percent of equipment on location and a little more than three percent of new games bought. Nearly 70 percent of dart-games operators bought fewer (48.2 percent) or about the same number (21.7 percent) of the games than in 1985. The average weekly gross for the games fell from $57 last year to $43.90 this year. Operating costs added up to an average of $9.74 a week.

The average weekly gross for kiddie rides rose to $33 with an average operating cost of $7.86. Novelties grossed about the same a week ($54) as in 1986; operating costs were $10.

OPERATOR POPULATION (%) BY NUMBER OF PIECES OF EQUIPMENT OPERATED

# PCS OF EQUIP	OPR %
0 - 75	29.6
76 - 150	23.1
151 - 300	20.6
301 - 500	11.9
501 - 750	6.1
751 - 1500	6.5
1501 - 3000+	2.2

OPERATOR POPULATION (%) BY NUMBER OF STREET LOCATIONS

# STREET LOCATIONS	OPR %
1 - 10	20.6
11 - 25	21.5
26 - 50	20.6
51 - 75	10.5
76 - 150	13.6
151 - 200	5.3
201 - 300	2.6
301 - 400	2.2
401 - 2000+	3.1

OPERATOR POPULATION (%) BY NUMBER OF ARCADE LOCATIONS

# ARCADE LOCATIONS	OPR %
1 - 2	60.1
3 - 5	26.6
6 - 10	7.5
11 - 20	3.5
21 - 300+	2.3

OPERATIONS

Operators cited sales taxes and machine-license fees as two of their greatest concerns. A majority, 54 percent, now pay a a sales or gross-receipts tax. In 1984, 48 percent did, and in 1983 only 39 percent. The trend is clear, and operators see the threat.

Non-jukebox machine-license fees are another headache. The average such fee is more than $55 per machine, and about 28 percent of operators pay more than that. A little more than 22 percent expect their fees to be raised.

As for jukebox licensing, survey respondents were asked the percentage of operators they know who operate unlicensed jukeboxes. About three-fourths of the operators said they don't know anyone operating the machines without a license. A fourth of the operators said more than half the operators they know operate unlicensed phonographs.

Location splits changed significantly in 1986 in that the percentage of operators giving locations more than 50 percent of the gross fell to less than 13 percent. In 1985 30 percent of all operators paid more than 50 percent; in 1983 nearly half did. While the percentage of operators paying less than 50 percent to locations also dropped (from nine percent to about three percent), the movement was all toward the industry standard of a 50-50 split. The latter arrangement is now in force on the routes of more than 84 percent of all operators.

A little more than 13 percent of operators establish minimum guarantees with locations, while a little less than 13 percent offer loans to their locations. About 48 percent of operators use location contracts, and of that group more than 10 percent have them in force with all their locations.

Less than three percent of operators charge locations service fees, but operators make an average of 29 service calls a week. That average appears weighted by calls made by larger operators: nearly 42 percent of operators make five or fewer service calls a week. Similarly, while the average number of business vehicles per operator is four, more than 52

percent of operators have only one or two business vehicles.

And while the average number of full-time employees per operator (including the operator himself) is about 11, for about 65 percent of all operators that number is four or less. The number of part-time employees is 13.6 per operator, but for nearly 77 percent it is three or less.

For 64 percent of operators, large and small, their local distributor remains their primary supplier of new equipment. Less than 30 percent of operators turn first to non-local distributors. The presence of operator-distributors is reflected in that the rest of the operators report they buy their new games from manufacturers or other operators.

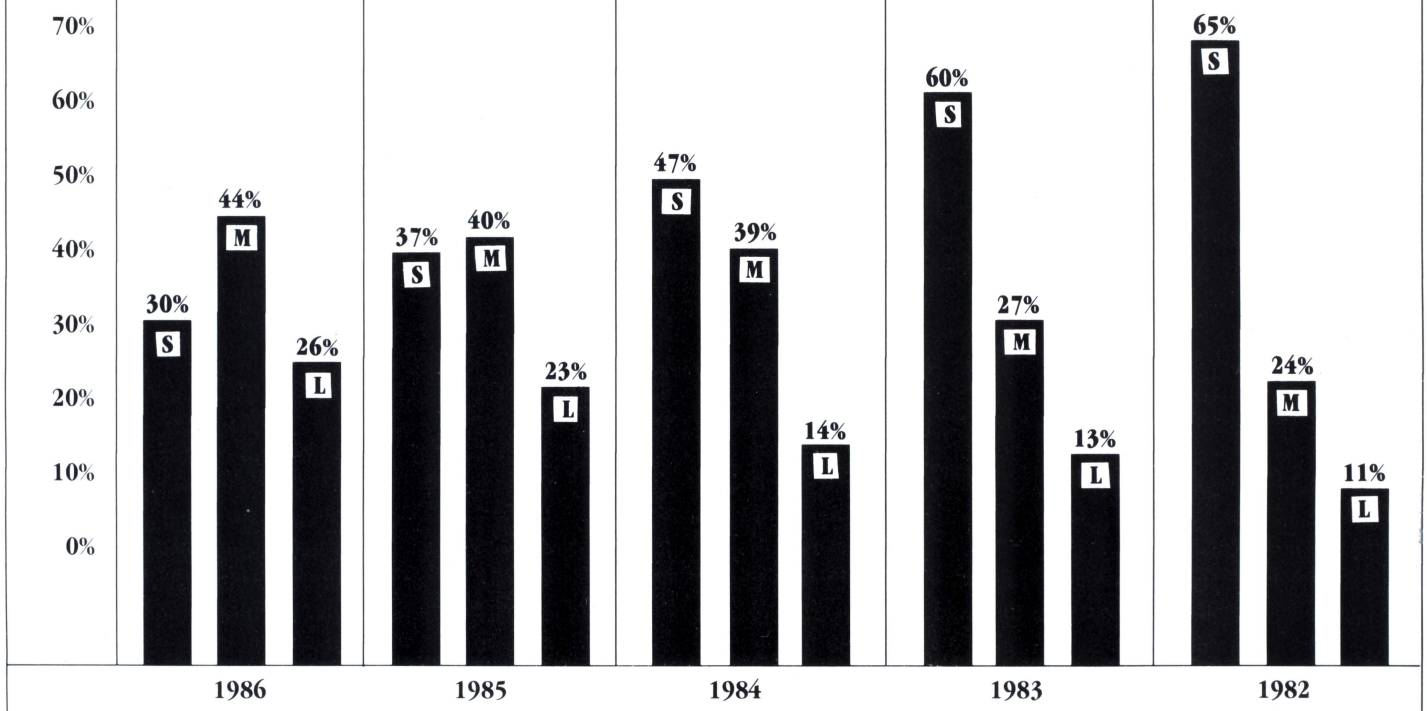
Three-fourths of all operators bought used games in 1986, and their two primary suppliers of those were their local distributor (34 percent) and other operators (32 percent). It's interesting that auctions are the primary source of used games for as many operators (15 percent) as turn to non-local distributors for them.

How many of the "used" games bought actually are either parallel imports or counterfeits is impossible to determine from the survey, but there is one indirect measure of parallel-board use. While about 74 percent of the poll's respondents said they know what a parallel game is, only 41 percent said they consider parallel imports illegal, 27 percent said they consider them legal, and 32 percent are unsure.

As for counterfeit games, operators were asked to provide the percentage of operators they know who operate such games. The average response was 17 percent, but it was weighted by the nearly 63 percent who responded that they know of no counterfeit-game operators. More than 37 percent of operators gave an average response that about 46 percent of the operators they know deal with counterfeit games.

The same question was asked about

OPERATOR POPULATION (PERCENT) BY SIZE OF OPERATION



NOTE: Size of operation is determined by total number of machines on location. SMALL: Operator of 75 machines or fewer; MEDIUM: from 76 to 300 machines; LARGE: 301 or more machines.

grey-area games, and the results were similar. About 56 percent of the operators responded that they know no grey-area-game operators, and overall average response was 22.6 percent. But about 44 percent of the operators gave an average response that 58 percent of the operators they know do operate grey-area games.

Information is clearer on the percentage of operators of other kinds of equipment. Nearly 29 percent of operators run cigarette machines, and, for more than 67 percent of those operators, the cigarettes turned a profit.

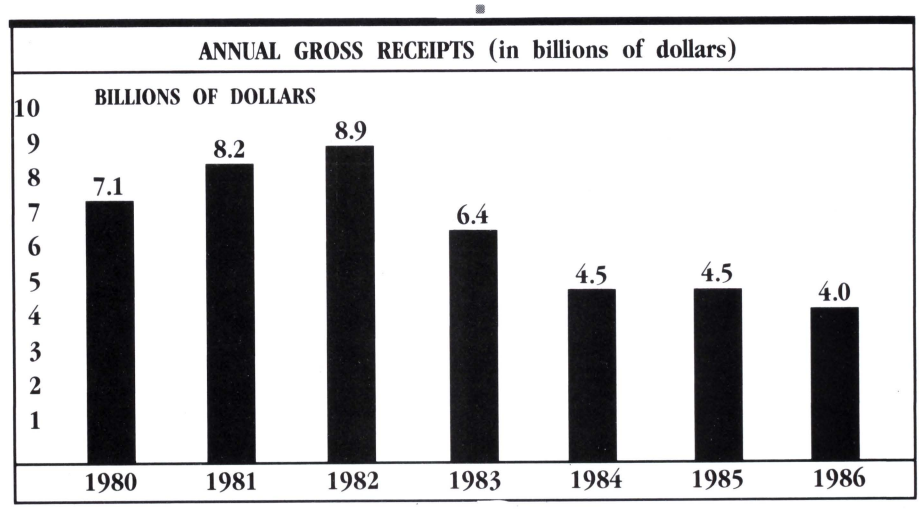
Canned-drink machines are handled by about 12 percent of amusement operators, and almost 14 percent operate candy and snack machines. Amusement operators appear to be looking more and more toward vending to expand or enhance their routes: 15 percent are planning to get into vending in the next 12 months.

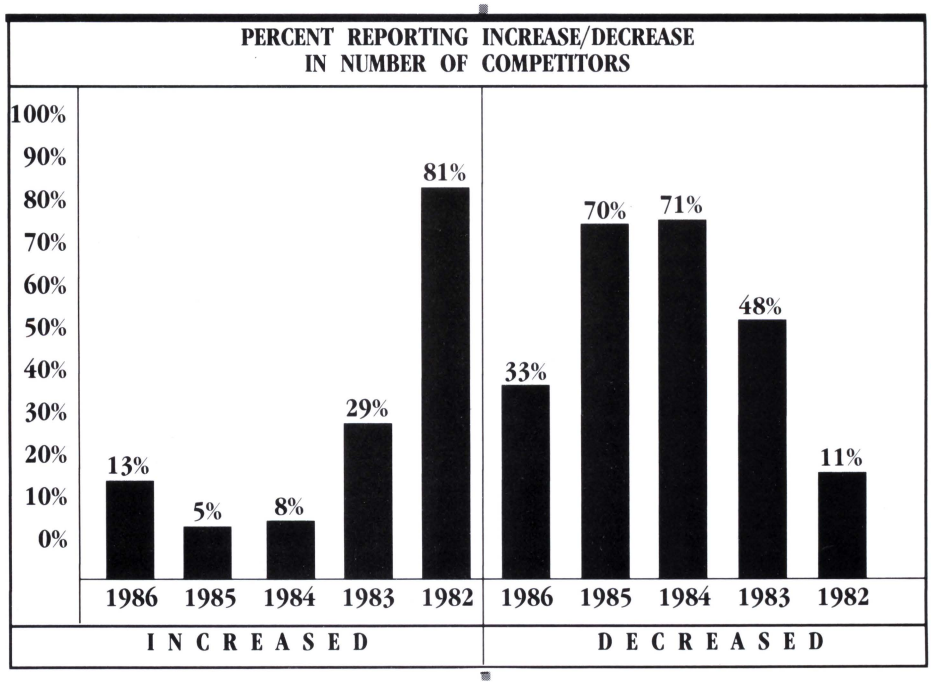
Vending is, of course, not the only outside venture on operators' minds, as more than 47 percent will either continue or begin non-amusement-machine businesses in the coming year.

Among alternative businesses, pay phones certainly have appealed to operators as a natural extension of the routes. And while 6.6 percent of operators have thus far entered the pay-phone business, almost 16 percent believe phones will constitute a profitable part of their business in the future.

Regardless of the businesses in which they're involved, more and more operators are "computerizing." They're using computers mainly for payroll (15 percent), accounting (29 percent), and route management (28 percent). Overall, about 43 percent of operators are now using computers for one purpose or another.

Of the operators managing their routes by computer, most (62 percent) are using one of the several industry-specific route-management programs that have become available





in the past few years. Of those who have bought such software (which is usually much more expensive than off-the-shelf software that can be adapted for route management), nearly 70 percent are satisfied with the software's performance.

Software programs to manage league programs also have become available, which is good news for the 15 percent of operators involved in pool leagues and 11 percent with dart leagues.

OUTLOOK

The industry shake-out, a storm that raged in 1983, 1984, and most of 1985, was much less harsh in 1986. It is a storm that according to all indications has blown over.

It is probable that next year's *Play Meter* report on the state of the industry will be the first since 1983's not to report a decline in operator population or total gross collections.

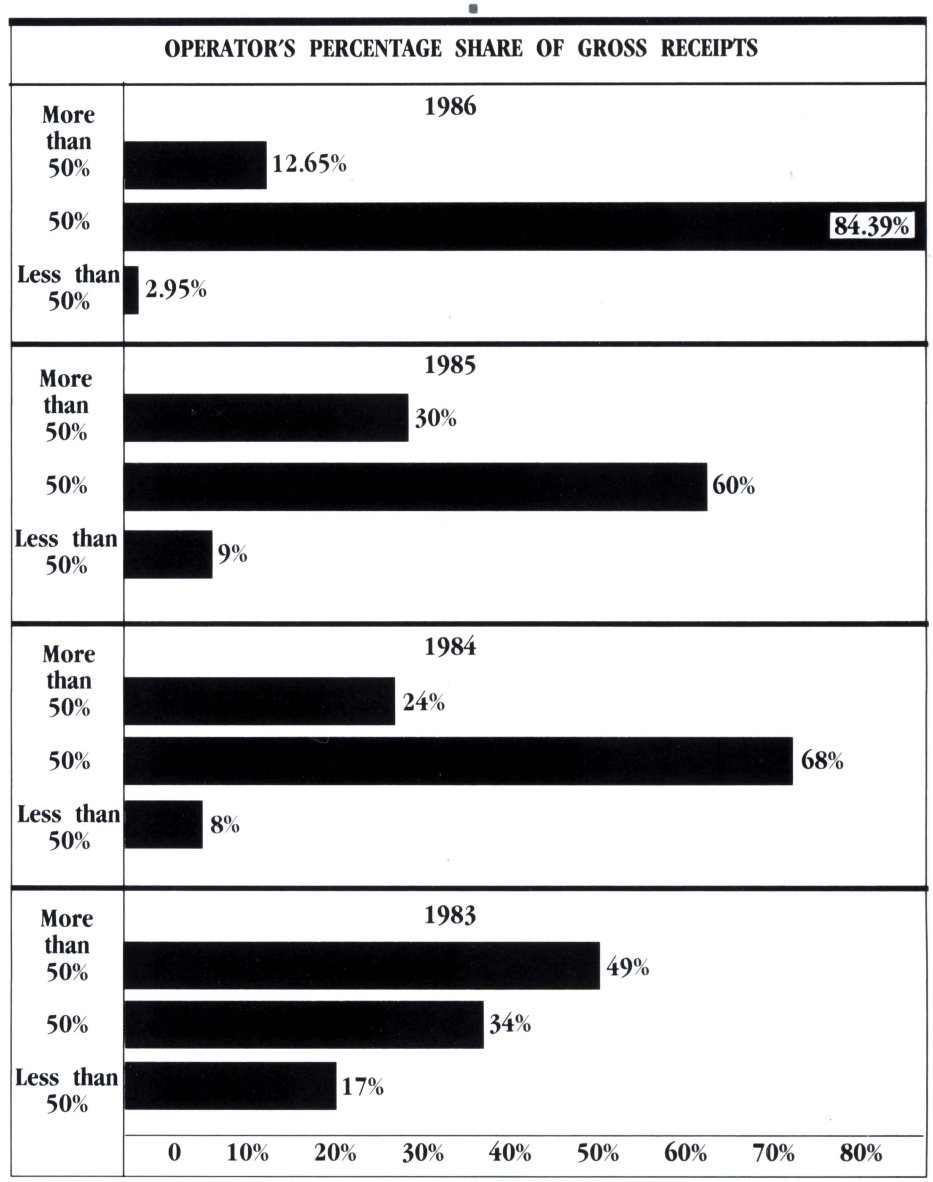
The average operator is in better financial health than in some time, and there probably will be more opportunity for operating businesses to grow in the coming year.

None of this necessarily translates into a purely blue-skied 1987, however, as the industry must cope with some serious problems.

Judging from the comments of operators participating in the survey, tax and licensing worries and high equipment prices head their list of concerns.

Game operators are among the more popular whipping boys of local governments, which developed the habit of liberally taxing and licensing operators and their equipment during the boom years. As this year's survey shows, fees and taxes have not stopped rising. As state and local governments are receiving less and less money from the federal government, odds are that the trend will continue.

High-priced equipment presents a



RANGE OF 1986
AVERAGE WEEKLY GROSS COLLECTIONS
BY PERCENTAGE OF OPERATORS

COLLECTIONS	VIDEOS	PINS	PHONOGRAPHS	POOL TABLES	DARTS	NOVELTIES	KIDDIE RIDES	MERCHANDISER
$5 - $25	15.8	20.1	16.4	11.1	33.3	29.4	48.4	22
26 - 50	39.5	42.3	42.8	34.4	43.8	41.2	35.5	
51 - 75	22.4	22.8	20.3	21.5	14.6	5.9	16.1	24
76 - 100	16.24	10.1	17.2	15.6	4.2	17.6		
101 - 125	2.64	5.3	2.3	3.7		5.9	-	
126 - 150	3.52				4.2		-	
151 - 300		-	1.6	3.7			-	16
301 - 400	-	-			-	-	-	6
401 - 500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
501 - 1000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
1001 - 1500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4

1986
AVERAGE WEEKLY GROSS COLLECTIONS
BY TYPE OF MACHINE

	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1079	1978
Pool Tables	$61	$58	$60	$58	$63	$67	$66	$57	$53
Non-Video Arcade Games	$55	$55	$59	-	$46	$36	$33	-	-
Electronic Dart Games	$44	$57	$55	-	-	-	-	-	-
Video Games	$57	$57	$53	$70	$109	$140	$102	$64	$50
Counter Games	-	$57	$52	-	$49	$37	-	-	-
Kiddie Rides	$33	$21	$50	-	$37	-	-	-	-
Pinball Games	$51	$52	$41	$38	$55	$66	$63	$65	$62
Phonographs	$55	$47	$40	$50	$51	$55	$50	$54	$52
Shuffleboards	-	$31	$30	-	$48	$31	$28	$41	$32
Foosballs	-	$25	$26	-	$31	$28	$20	$31	$41

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

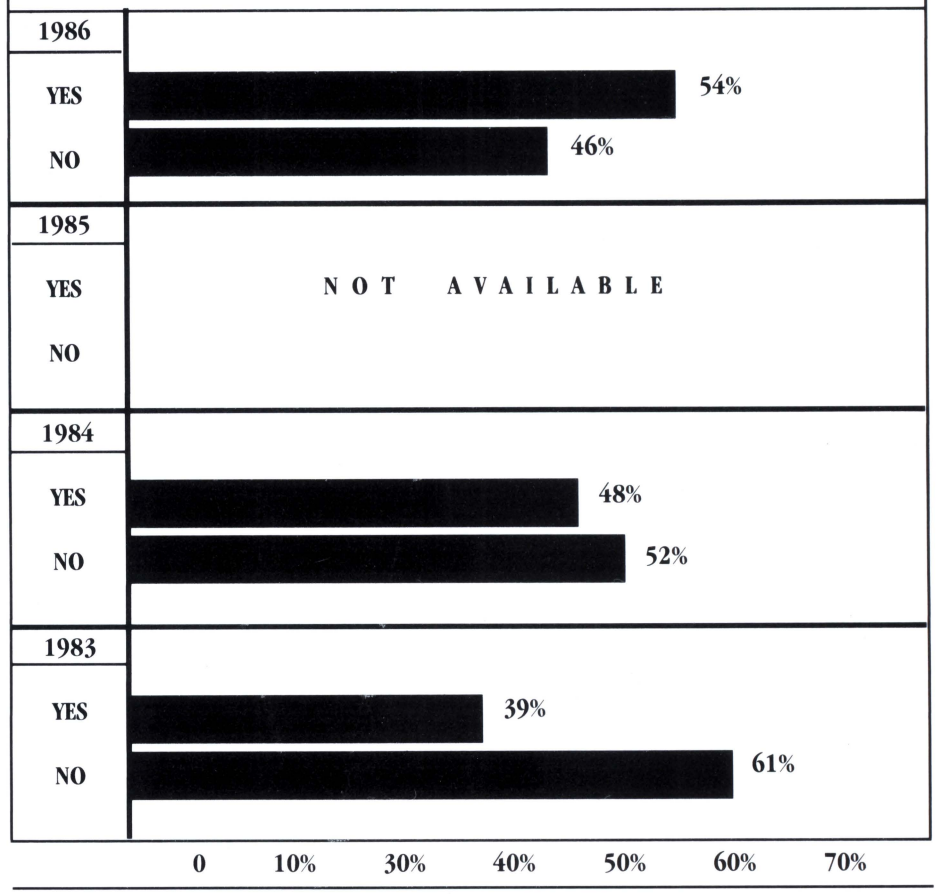
EQUIPMENT TYPES AS PERCENTAGES OF GAMES ON LOCATION

Videos	65.2%
Pinballs	10.3
Jukeboxes	8.6
Pool Tables	5.7
Merchandisers	2.9
Kiddie Rides	2.6
Dart Games	2.6
Novelties	2.2

NEW GAME PURCHASES

Videos	173,000
Pinballs	28,000
Jukeboxes	14,000
Pool Tables	12,000
Merchandisers	10,000
Dart Games	8,000
Kiddie Rides	4,000
Novelties	3,000
Table Games	3,000

OPERATORS PAYING GROSS RECEIPTS OR SALES TAX



NEW EQUIPMENT BUYING TRENDS ALL OPERATORS

	Bought More	Bought Same	Bought Fewer
Videos	35.8%	45.5%	18.7%
Pinballs	52.5%	21.3%	26.2%
Jukeboxes	29.1	36.4%	34.5%
Pool Tables	21.5%	40.3%	38.2%
Merchandisers	58.5%	24.5%	17.0%
Dart Games	30.1%	48.2%	21.7%
Kiddie Rides	14.0%	44.0%	42.0%
Novelties	26.4%	29.2%	44.4%
Table Games	21.0%	38.3%	40.7%

AVERAGE ANNUAL MACHINE-LICENSE FEE

$ 1 - $ 20	26.4%*
21 - 35	19.6
36 - 50	23.2
51 - 100	23.2
101 - 350	6.3
351 - 700	1.4

*percentage of operators paying fee

dilemma for operators who, while seeing the need for good games that will draw players, are gun-shy about spending a lot, and borrowing a lot, for a game.

But perhaps the situation will improve this year if the industry makes headway in solving the problems of counterfeit and parallel games. The connection between high prices and illicit games was apparent at the AMOA show, where there were relatively few good universal kits and relatively many expensive, hardware-oriented dedicated games.

Merchandisers represent another prospective problem in 1987. While the equipment promises great opportunity for the industry, there is concern over the possibility of a government/law-enforcement backlash as crane and rotary merchandisers become more widespread.

Something else the industry will have to address is the fundamental need to attract more players in a time when videos have long since lost their novelty appeal and tavern locations are being hurt by higher drinking ages and stiffer drunk-driving laws. The situation obviously has worried manufacturers, who are trying to come up with an acceptable way to promote their games to the public.

Despite all the industry's problems, though, operators can move into 1987 confident that it will be a better year than any of the past few.

OPERATOR EDUCATION	
Graduated High School	96.2%
Attended College	77.3%
Graduated College	45.1%

CONDITIONS OF LOCAL ECONOMY	
Improved	26.5%
Worsened	35.8%
Stayed The Same	37.6%

PINBALL ACTION LIKE NEVER BEFORE!
ALL NEW!
WONDER RUBBER™
RINGS & ACCESSORIES
• Field Tested and Approved by the Leading Game Manufacturers
• Last Longer than leading rubber rings
• Stay Whiter than leading rubber rings
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• RUBBER TIPS • PLUNGER TIPS • BUMPER POST RINGS • SUPER PLUNGER TIPS
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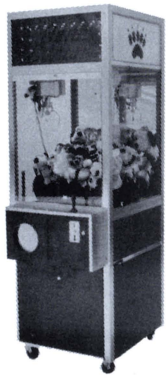
BEAR CLAW™

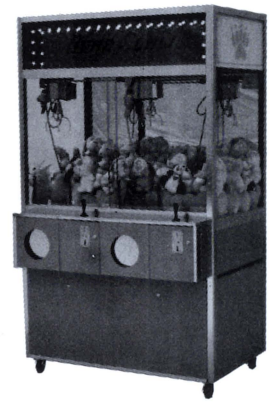
SMART INDUSTRIES CORP., MFG.
1801 Bell Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50315
Phone: (515) 244-3500

BEAR CLAW MEANS BIG PROFITS!

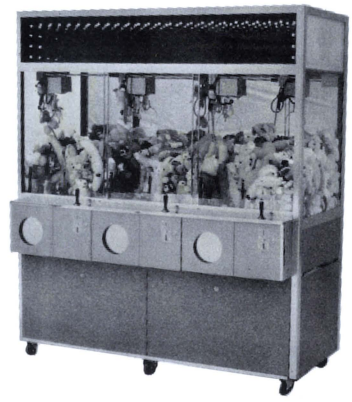
A high volume machine that requires very low maintenance because of safe guards programmed into the unit. There are two game programs built into the game board. This allows you the selection that best fits your location. Optional dollar bill acceptor mounted on the coin door, eliminates the need of making change and increases the machines use. This means higher volume and profits!



SINGLE CLAW UNIT
Dimensions:
26¼" Wide
34" Depth
58" High (Trailer Mounted)
81" High (Floor Model)



TWO CLAW UNIT
Dimensions:
48⅜" Wide
34" Depth
58" High (Trailer Mounted)
81" High (Floor Model)



THREE CLAW UNIT
Dimensions:
71" Wide
34" Depth
58" High (Trailer Mounted)
81" High (Floor Model)

MADE IN U.S.A.
See your local distributor for prices.

SINGLE PLAYER
2-PLAYER
or
3-PLAYER

- Two Game Option (Fast or Skill)
- Superior Joy Stick Control
- Fully Adjustable Claws
- Breakdown Cabinet For Easy Handling
- Optional Dollar Bill Acceptors

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The Sparkle is Back!

When asked his view of the AMOA's Expo '86, a smiling Nolan Bushnell replied, "The sparkle is back! Optimism has returned and it's fun. If we aren't having fun, then we've missed something."

If the mood of the 6,802 attendees at the AMOA show is any indication, then video-game pioneer Bushnell is right: the industry's sparkle *is* back.

Nowhere on the exhibit floor was that sparkle more evident than at the booths displaying cranes and merchandisers. The equipment floods the senses with color and music, and the hope of retrieving a prize gives adrenalin the green light. Merchandisers represent a part of the coin-op industry that has grown rapidly in the past two years. And when 19 companies promote the same kind of product at a trade show, it's not a fad. More like a phenomenon. In floor space alone, and overall impression, merchandisers dominated this year's AMOA Expo.

The merchandiser seminar attracted a standing-room-only crowd, indicating an operator hunger for more information on the product and its management.

Basically, merchandisers are divided into two categories: cranes, or claw mechanisms in which the player controls the claw, moving it around and dropping it into the prize bin within an operator-adjustable length of time; and rotaries, or arm mechanisms in which the prizes appear on a rotating table and players position an arm, or in some cases a scooper, to push prizes to a center or side opening. Players operate cranes with buttons or joysticks; rotaries usually with buttons. Plush items are by far the leading prizes used in both types. Nine companies that supply prizes were at the show.

Some companies offer both crane and rotary merchandisers, including Betson Enterprises, Coin-It Companies, Roth Novelty, and UAI. Century Vending and Game Masters both produce rotary merchandisers only.

Companies specializing in crane merchandisers alone include Brady Distributing, Dynasoft, Funtek, Global Imports, Grayhound Electronics, Hollywood Cranes, M. Kramer Manufacturing, Riviera Manufacturing, Showcase, Smart Industries, SMS Manufacturing, Spencer Industries, and Wedges/Ledges.

Betson featured its *Big Choice* skill crane in single, double, and triple versions, the *Big Choice Jr.*, and *Your Choice 4 Low Boy* cranes; also the *Fantasy Island* rotary, and the new *Prize Is Right.*

Also displayed at Betson's booth were *Skil-O-Bingo* and *Five In Line*, ticket or token-dispensing games.

Showcase debuted its *Deluxe Mini Single* and *Cocktail Crane* that feature an innovative platform with baffles that continually rotate, tumble, and mix the prizes. The cocktail unit is available in burlwood or black and silver and operates with a two-way joystick control.

Roth Novelty displayed its dome-topped *Diga Mart* four-player unit that has a crane mechanism and a rotary table for prizes. Roth also showed the *UFO Catcher* two-player unit and *Miracle Hat*, a one-to-four player token or ticket dispensing game.

UAI New Jersey exhibited the Sonic *Tripleway Crane*, *UPLAY Lucky Crane*, and *Treasure Island Gifts* rotary. The Sonic cranes come with a prize-metering systems, dollar-bill acceptors, winner lights, and joystick controls. The rotary merchandiser is a four-player unit with adjustable turntable speed, running lights, and a 50-cent-play option.

Rich Bartlett of R&M Distributing of West Hempstead, N.Y., an operator of 39 crane merchandisers, explained that he likes the Sonic cranes because of the prize-metering system, all-solid-state options, and the 25-cent or 50-cent play. "I want to know how many prizes go out," he said.

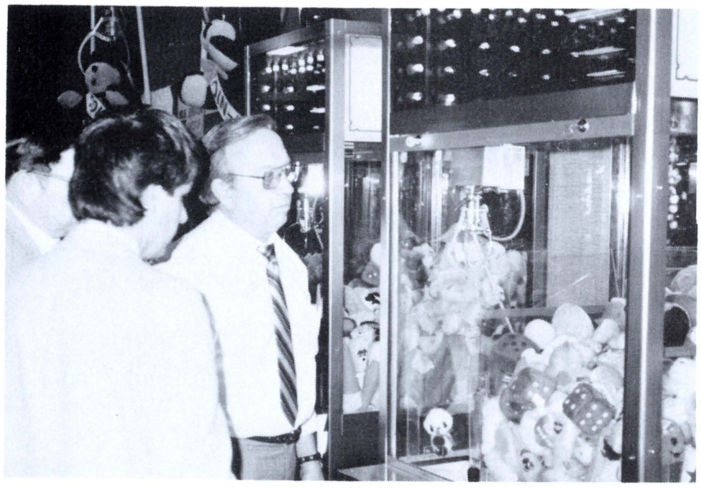
Sonic cranes have digital credit timers, metal frame cabinets, optional $1-$5 bill acceptors and ticket dispensers, unauthorized-intrusion sensors and alarms, winner-light systems, sound systems, and complete player-skill control.

SMS Manufacturing displayed its *Skill Crane* with an adjustable claw grip, complete music/sound and light packages, and chase lights over a mirrored header. SMS also showed its new *Second Chance* video poker.

Dynasoft introduced its *Big Top* single upright crane with four different game-play modes in a variety of software packages for increased operator-selectable functions. Dynasoft began studying cranes in November 1985 and put its efforts into the circuitry for improved electronics. *Big Top* features extra depth in the prize area, a double coin mechanism, a prize counter, and an optional coupon dispenser to let customers save for larger prizes viewed in an acrylic case atop the machine (also optional).

Grayhound Electronics displayed the new *Jumbo Skill Crane* and single, double, triple, and countertop models available with button or joystick control. The *Jumbo Skill Crane* has a wide viewing area on a child's-eye level, a

Rick Kirby of New England Coin-Op (from left) joins Tim Lyman and Bob Havey of Lyla Corp. of Burlington, Vt., at the Betson booth.



Gordon Smart of Smart Industries (right) shows operators the *Clean Sweep* crane.

Dominick Puma of Grayhound Electronics with the new *Jumbo Skill Crane.*

Mike Macke of Game Masters (right) explains features of *Spin Out*, a rotary merchandiser.

Jeremiah Dooley of Riviera Manufacturing (right) shows crane features to an operator.

Spencer Industries completed its *Skillmaster* just in time for the Expo.

A family stops to play the *Treasure Chest* by Spencer Industries.

A Global Imports representative shows the *Skill Crane* to a show attendee.

swing-open bottom door, an oversized cashbox, and a prize-storage compartment. Rolling, locking wheels are a feature, as are a $1-$5 bill acceptor and a credit accumulator.

M. Kramer Manufacturing Co. showed its line of crane games as well as video poker games. The single *Kramer Krane*, *Mini Krane*, and *Gum Ball Krane* all offer a wide range of options, including bill acceptors, multi-coin accumulators, ticket dispensers, operator-adjustable claws for different kinds of prizes, and operator-selectable play settings.

Hollywood Cranes occupied a large area with its full line of upright cranes with almost a designer-look. Available units include the original *Hollywood*, *Fun Shop* and *Monster Crane* with a rustic finish, and the *Casablanca* with solid oak finish. Standard features include one-door entry, chaser lights, locking casters, and a win cycle with a win meter.

Coin-It Companies demonstrated its *Fortune Crane* single player unit with a lowered playfield, a dual coin mechanism, and a standard joystick control (button optional), and introduced the *Fortune Rotary* with a mechanical coin meter, double coin entry, button control, and plug-in modular electronics.

Funtek featured its *Midway Crane* single unit and *Goldigger* countertop. Each has an all-metal cabinet and plug-in/plug-out component design. They are completely U.S. made.

Global Imports exhibited its *Skill Crane* available in single, double, and triple models with an optional gumball kit that also fits most other cranes. Both button and joystick controls are available.

The *Clean Sweep* crane was featured at a booth sponsored by Smart Industries and its national distributor, Central Distributing. *Clean Sweep* has a built-in credit bonus that allows players five games for four quarters and one quarter for one play. It is available as super single, regular single, two-claw unit, and three-claw unit.

Brady Distributing exhibited Bonori cranes that are available in single, double, and triple models. Bonori's *Skill Crane* has welded steel framing, one-piece door opening, tempered glass on all viewing areas, and a two-way adjustable claw. There is a separate service switch for the claw assembly and a large separate locking cash box.

Game Masters, Mike Macke's new company, demonstrated its rotary merchandiser *Spin Out*, which is U.S.-made. Adjustable for different skill levels, *Spin Out* comes with a spare player-station circuit board for instant repairs.

Century Vending also featured a rotary merchandiser, its six-player unit that follows the success of the company's original eight-player model.

Spencer Industries has entered the crane market with its T-top model, *Skillmaster*, and the cabinet-style *Treasure Chest*. The T-top comes in two sizes, the larger being 39

1/2 inches tall. Both units have double coin entry, bill acceptors, and button control with optional joysticks. The cabinet unit is a one-to-three-player crane with a bill acceptor and a single coin mechanism standard. It can be a table unit, regular upright, and barstool height to suit a variety of locations.

Riviera Industrial introduced its *Riviera Claw* line of cranes in countertop, single, double, and triple models. Features include dual coin mechanisms, coin-in and prize meters, tilt alarms, and button or joystick control.

Wedges/Ledges displayed its big *Challenger* that accommodates extra-large plush prizes.

The many cranes and rotary merchandisers introduced for the first time at the AMOA show are evidence that, while they may be controversial because of the varying laws throughout the country, cranes are here to stay.

Videos

Though attentions were drawn toward the vast array of cranes, currently the center of coin-op popularity, video manufacturers exhibited some exciting product. In fact, many operators said the variety of good equipment was greater than they had seen in a long time. At the same time, however, some felt that there were too many games that resurrected themes from older hit games. Said a midwest operator, "I see games that are remakes of games like *Vanguard*, *Crazy Climber*, and *Breakout*."

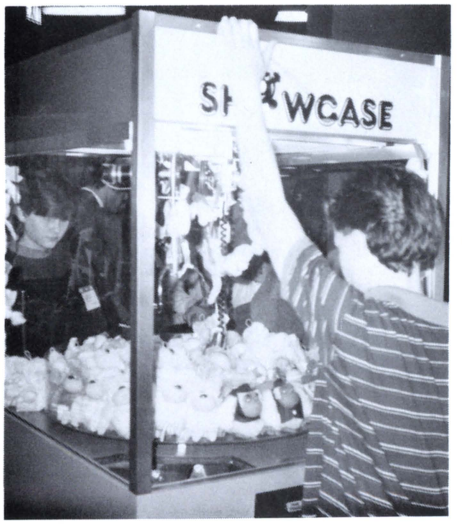
Another common observation was that the Japanese companies introducing these new versions may feel there is a new generation that may not have played those earlier games, so they are introducing improved versions of old favorites. The theory seems to have worked, because operators seemed receptive to the new games.

They were not as receptive to the prices. The number-one comment from operators was the high cost of equipment. Said one: "I am finally out of debt after quite a few years, and it looks like the manufacturers want me to get back in debt. Well, I won't put out that kind of money again."

But manufacturers countered that games and kits are more expensive because of new technology. As a result, they say, the games are better now than they were then.

Not unexpectedly, the two games that dominated conversations about game prices were the games that dominated the Japanese show only weeks before and repeated their performance at the AMOA: the sit-down versions of Konami's *WEC LeMans* and Sega's *Out Run*. Both are car-replica cabinets that allow the player to "ride" as he plays. The price and size of both, however, will limit the number of locations able to handle them and the number of operators who can afford them. Both

Dynasoft's *Big Top* crane gets a thorough review.



Two teens try the *Showcase* crane that has baffles and a rotating table for good prize viewing and accessibility.

Attendees gather at Hollywood Manufacturing's *Fun Shop* crane.

Both mother and son are attracted to the SMS Manufacturing *Skill Crane.*

A player tries the Coin-It *Fortune Crane.*

Bright graphics draws a young player to *Miracle Hat* by Roth Novelty.

A youngster tries for a prize in Roth Novelty's *Diga Mart.*

also were offered in upright versions.

Atari probably had the most unique promotion in its booth for its new *720 Degrees*, a skateboard-themed game. Kids on skateboards demonstrated their considerable skill on a skateboard-park display. The game is a dedicated video with a joystick that rotates 360 degrees. Atari also showed *Championship Sprint* and *Roadrunner*, designed for the System I, and a *Gauntlet II* kit, an update for *Gauntlet* 4-player.

Bally Midway showed *Power Drive*, a dedicated video featuring truck competition for three players with three different vehicles and a continuous buy-in feature.

Bally Sente's two new games for its Sente system, *Night Stocker* and *Street Football*, both introduced shortly before the AMOA show, are both destined to be high earners. Operators seem pleased, and commented on the high-quality product coming out for the Sente system. "Our priority is to put out quality product for the system," said Bob Lundquist, Sente's president, "and I think operators feel confident that they are getting what they pay for."

Capcom, which has licensed some highly successful games to other companies, showed *Speed Rumbler* and *Legendary Wings*, a science-fiction shoot-'em-up kit. *Speed Rumbler*, out several weeks, has shown high earnings.

Cinematronics outdid itself with its new introductions. *Danger Zone* is an arcade piece with a double joystick that enables players to get some realistic combat action. Its innovative cabinet has twin handles that swivel the monitor left and right and tilt it up and down. Its stainless-steel cabinet gives it a high-tech look. *Redline Racer* is a wild road race over 16 different tracks available as a four-player or two-player upright. Cinematronics also showed its countertop versions of the popular *World Series* and *Alley Master*. Cinematronics John Margold said he was "absolutely overwhelmed by the response at this show."

Coin-It showed its *Pony II* cabinets. The company has entered into an agreement with the European company Rare to originate software for the Nintendo's VS. System.

Data East has come back strong with *Fire Trap*, a vertical-monitor kit that has the player scaling tall buildings as a firefighter battling a blaze and rescuing occupants; *Last Mission*, an inexpensive space-themed dedicated game with a scrolling screen; *Lock-On*, an upright or sitdown fighter-pilot game; and *Shackled*, a one or two-player game.

Dynamo, the pool/table-hockey/table-soccer company, has been manufacturing a variety of video games for such companies as Sega, Data East, and Tradewest. Dynamo is offering a video-game cabinet for kits that are, as Dynamo's Mark Struhs puts it, "just too good for a cabinet that needs to be junked."

Exidy showed the new *0077*, a driving and shooting game available as an upright or sitdown. Operators

commented that the action was a bit slow in its present form. Look for an improved model.

Grand Products, the young company started by Bally alumni Dave Marofske, Hank Ross, and Stan Jarocki, showed a new video, *Up Periscope*, said by one of their distributors to be the show's surprise sleeper. There is a lot of potential in Grand Products, and the industry should be looking toward the company for innovative products.

Aside from the aforementioned *WEC LeMans*, Konami showed several fantastic kits. *Double Dribble*, said to be updated *Super Basketball*, is a one or two-player dedicated or kit. Operators rated it as one of the show's best games. Konami's other two kits, *Lifeforce* and *Top Gunner*, also are potential hits.

Merit Industries, a leader in countertop games and dart games, had several new games that look great. *Match'em Up* is a countertop video in which the player must match hidden pictures. After the machine flashes pictures on the screen to be memorized, the player must choose squares to match them up. *MAD Adder* is another matching game, but with numbers. The player selects a number and must hit the lit keys to match the number. He keeps going until the numbers are all out.

Merit also showed its Supertop countertop cabinet designed for any game board. It converts both vertical and horizontal games with features such as dual coin mechanisms, a universal power supply, an isolation transformer, and ace locks.

Nichibutsu has a winner with the new *Dangar*, an action-packed kit. Nichibutsu's Ron Siller said the company was surprised but pleased at the response to this game. Nichibutsu showed an as-yet-unnamed game with a karate theme that should be out in January.

Nintendo's *VS. Slalom*, a downhill skiing game complete with ski poles and skis, looked to be fun and was popular with operators. Other Nintendo games, *VS. Goonies*, *VS. Nemesis*, and *Gradius* also look to be profitable VS. games. *Play Choice-10*, Nintendo's unique 10-games-in-one-cabinet game, drew high marks also. The company has promised new games every two months. Operator comments about *Play Choice-10* were very good. One said he felt it would open several locations that he had not been able to get.

Romstar's *Arkanoid*, also available from Merit as a countertop, is still high in the equipment charts. A vertical kit with an action theme, the game has been growing in popularity since its introduction, and from the reaction at the show, it should continue to be a money-maker.

Romstar's *Bubble Bobble* is a horizontal-monitor kit with a maze/shooting theme, and it features more than 100 screens. Romstar also showed *Side Arms*, a one or two-player horizontal kit licensed from Capcom.

Status's star of the show was an economically priced horizontal kit called *Clash Road*. It is a bicycle road race

UAI's *Treasure Island Gifts* attracts young players (right). At left are Rich Bartlett of R&M Distributing of W. Hempstead, N.Y., and Len Dean of UAI.

Show attendees stop by *Fantasy Island* and *Big Choice* merchandisers at Betson's booth.

A member of the U.S. Video Game Team negotiates a turn on Sega's *Out Run*.

Gene Cramm (right) of Show Biz Pizza, who raved about Sun's *VS. Sky Kid*, is at Sun's booth with (from left) Steve Thomas of Show Biz and Richard and Joe Robbins of Sun.

As it was at Japan's trade show in October, *WEC LeMans* was a hit at the AMOA.

Mike Yaffa (left) and Ralph Paukner show off Status' new *Clash Road*.

Data East's *Lock-On* drew its share of attention.

Brady Distributing's Raleigh Rossow shows how much fun Nintendo's *VS. Slalom* can be.

and looks like it will be a high earner. Status also showed *19th Hole*, a miniature golf game; *Super Triv II*, the latest in the series of trivia games; *Mission 660*, shown only as a prototype; and *Spectra*.

Sun Corporation, the former KitKorp, showed *Body Slam*, a two-player horizontal kit featuring female wrestlers; *Quartet*, a one or two-player kit that was first introduced as a four-player dedicated game by Sega; and *Sky Kid*, which has been redesigned for the VS. System. It is modestly priced and operators raved about it.

Taito had the most varied selection of equipment ranging from unique cabinets to a three-monitor game. The cabinets are like large balls sitting on a pole with a portion scooped out for the game. They come three to a set in two configurations, side by side or in a cluster.

Darius, the three-monitor game, is an underwater shooting game designed for large arcades; *Kick and Run*, a one- to four-player soccer game, was kept busy with interested attendees. This is the first of a projected series of sports games from Taito. Taito also showed *New York Captor*, its two-piece arcade-sized shooting game, and a back up kit called *Cycle Shooting*, and *Kiki*, a mid-priced vertical kit with a Samurai warrior theme.

Tradewest, with *Ikari Warriors* still in demand in its new kit form, has reunited two heroes from the game and introduced *Victory Road*, a dedicated game in progress. Preliminary reports indicate that this may rival *Ikari Warriors* in popularity and earnings.

Williams, while enjoying tremendous success with its pinballs, hasn't forgotten its video customers with its introduction of *Joust* 2. This sequel to the hit *Joust* is a two-player dedicated video featuring 35 different screens.

Pinballs

Aside from the overall quality of pins shown by Williams, Bally Midway, and Premier, the pinball news of the show was that Data East has decided to get into the pinball market. The company's new pinball division, which will be a wholly owned subsidiary, will be headed by Gary Stern, whose Pinstar, Inc., produced the *Gamatron* pinball conversion that was marketed in the past year by Kitkorp.

That news, combined with the impressive collection of pins at the show and rumors that still more pinball-manufacturer developments are in the offing, indicates that the so-called pinball revival is still going on.

The number of pins at the show was small, only six including two from the Spanish manufacturer Maquinas Automaticas Computerizadas, but those displayed all seemed exceptionally good.

Williams introduced *Pin Bot*, a space-robot-themed game that features a light bar that flashes and pulses to robot sounds and speech, a "space-nymph" mini-playfield, and a

robot visor at the top of the playfield that opens to reveal the robot's "eyes," which are eject holes for two-ball play.

The player advances from planet to planet with skill shots. Hitting a flashing target on the chest panel on the first shot, or completing all the lights on the panel, opens the robot's visor to enable multi-ball play. Ramp shots advance the bonus multiplier, and a lane-change feature rotates the extra-ball light on the last ball if the first two drained quickly.

Bally Midway's offering was *Strange Science*, a feature-loaded pin that has multi-ball play of up to five balls. The game's theme involves a mad scientist and a mind-swap between a gorilla and a female victim. The playfield includes ramps, "anti-gravity" tubes, and an "atom smasher" that stores the balls for multi-ball play. The game also includes a light bar that flashes a bolt of electricity and a button that enables the player to kick out a ball that drains down the left side. Bally promoted the game at the show with a pamphlet emphasizing *Strange Science's* comic-book theme.

Premier's new "Gottlieb" pin shown was *Gold Wings*, which, like the company's other pins in the past year, seeks to benefit from the appeal of a currently popular trend, movie, or television show. In this case the pin follows up on the movie *Top Gun* and its jet-fighter action. The game's photographic backglass (a young man and a woman on a motorcycle with a jet fighter ascending in the background) is topped by a light-box aircraft-carrier runway. The playfield includes a long twisting ramp on the right and another with a loop at the end on the left. Features include multi-ball play, eight-digit scoring, and a siren.

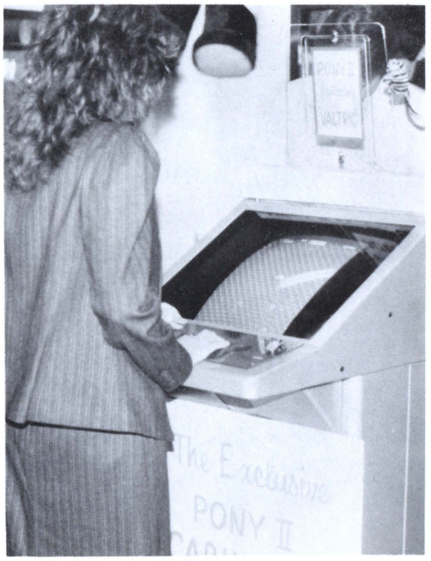
Absent from the show were such recently introduced pins as *Special Force*, *Road Kings*, and *Motordrome*, but another recent introduction, Premier's *Genesis* was on display and getting a lot of play despite sharing the booth with *Gold Wings*.

With its relatively simple playfield and direct approach, *Genesis* contrasted with the feature-packed pins exhibited. But the game has a very interesting feature of its own in its "lifeforce generator," which, when activated, raises and bathes in light at mid-playfield the robotic body the player has assembled in making the necessary shots to light up the words arms, legs, brain, and body.

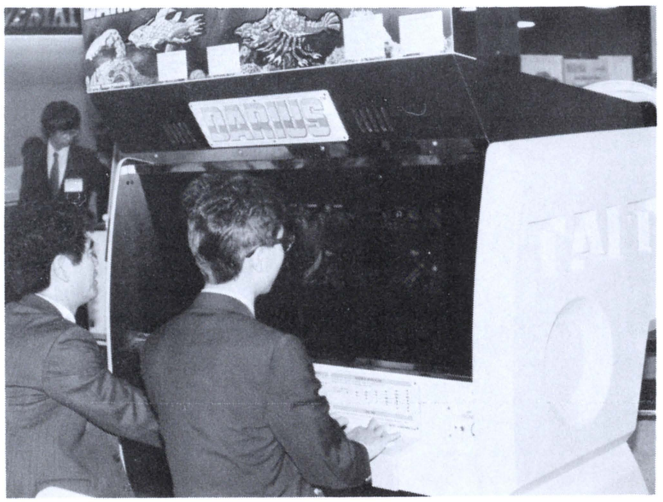
Spanish pinball maker Maquinas Automaticas Computerizadas (MAC) showed two pins at the booth of its Canadian distributor, Les Amusements St-Gervais, Inc. According to MAC's export manager, Jose Luis Rojas Felipe, the company has had some success in Canada, has benefited from an increase in pinball popularity in Europe, and now is ready to give the U.S. market a try. The two games at the show, *Mac's Galaxy* and *Mac Jungle*, seemed solid if conventional.

This distinguished-looking group includes (from left) American Vending's John Neville, Betson/Pacific's Will Laurie, and Oregon operator Bob Hasson.

Coin-It exhibited its unique Pony II cabinets for conversion kits.

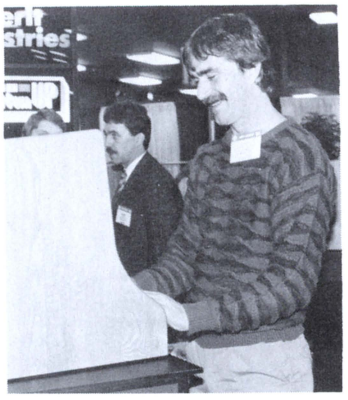


Ko Adachi (left) and Ron Siller display Nichibutsu's new game, *UFO Robo Dangar*.

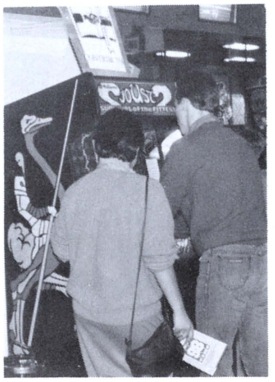


Taito's *Darius* was one of the unique games at the show.

A. Nakanishi, senior director of Taito Japan, with Paul Moriarity and Rick Rochetti of Taito America beside Taito's unique cabinet.



Jud Weeder of Inter Space Video enjoys Merit's *Arkanoid.*



Operators were interested in Williams' *Joust II* video.

Phonographs

Among the phonographs at the AMOA show, the old and the new vied for attention as operators were presented a selection of "antique" models, compact-disc units, and video jukeboxes as well as conventional equipment.

Seeburg, of course, was on hand with its *LaserMusic* compact-disc phonograph, and operators were touted on the company's compact-disc one-stop operation. But at this show Seeburg no longer had the compact-disc field all to itself.

Rowe introduced its new *R-91* phonograph not only in conventional form but also in a version that combines standard 45 play with compact-disc play. The "dual-system" unit includes a Pioneer compact-disc player that accommodates six discs (78 selections). For a limited time, according to Rowe, the company will offer a retrofit kit to enable standard *R-91*s to be equipped with the Pioneer compact-disc player. Once the dual-system version *R-91* is in full production, however, the retrofit kits will be discontinued.

Coin play is optional with the *R-91*; standard is a bill changer for prices of three or four plays for $1.

In addition to its *Video Jukebox*, Rowe showed an antique-recreation phonograph that will be available for delivery in January. Rowe's Jerry Gordon, who said there currently are about 1,000 *Video Jukebox* units being operated, emphasized the company's belief in offering a "complete line" of jukeboxes, including video, compact-disc, and nostalgic models.

NSM-Lions is planning a compact-disc model also, as the company announced at a distributors meeting at the show that the unit will be available in about six months.

While the company has no plans for an antique re-creation, it will be introducing a new model called the *Galaxy 200* after the first of the year. The new phonograph, which was not shown at the AMOA, will offer 200 selections and be hand-made of wood. Otherwise, NSM showed its complete line at the show, including the 1987 version of the *Concert 240*, which has been changed only cosmetically. (NSM also showed its *Cue 2000* fiberglass pool cue.)

Rock-Ola, too, is working on a compact-disc, but Bette Lockhart, the company's executive vice president, said it is taking a wait-and-see approach. The price of a dedicated CD model is just too high, she said, and any CD model the company may produce would have to combine a compact-disc player with a standard 45 record changer. She added that it is important that the CD player be "right" and of industrial rather than consumer quality.

Rock-Ola's booth featured its 160-selection *Nostalgia* model with Rock-Ola's voltage-regulated indexing system, "Opto-Sensor" record-selecting system, and "Accu-Trac"

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tone arm with a diamond stylus. Also on display was the Supersound 2 200-selection model.

Rounding out the selection of antique models was Wurlitzer's *One More Time*, a 200-watt 100-selection phonograph that beautifully re-creates the Wurlitzer *1015* of 1946, "the most successful, most celebrated, and most popular jukebox of all times."

The contrast of old and new was pronounced at Wurlitzer's booth as next to the *One More Time* was the company's *Lasergraph*, which incorporates a Philips laser-disc player and can be used a video jukebox.

Another laser-video phonograph, the *LVM Entertainment System*, was displayed by Laser Video Music, Inc., of Ambridge, Mass. The company promises three hours of updated programming a month and says the system provides "the most vibrant, distortion-free audio/video quality of the 20th century."

Traffic at the Videobox booth seemed to be steady, and the company with the laser-disc phonograph of the same name appears to be making some progress. Videobox has increased its staff and opened new offices recently, and it has plans to begin adding advertising features to its unit in January.

Mobile Records was on hand with advice and playlists for operators, who also had the chance to air their gripes, if they wished, with representatives of ASCAP and BMI, both of which had booths.

Novelties, darts, pool, and more

There were a few new faces among the familiar novelty companies at the show. Newcomers included Allegro, Inc., which exhibited *Ninja Web*, a microprocessor-based full-board reflex and reaction skill game patterned after a visual-activity training device used by professional athletes.

Russell Labs introduced its *Joke Phone* available in squeaky clean, risque, and barroom-joke models. Jim Hall, president of the company, recommends the *Joke Phone* for locations with limited space.

Profitable Games displayed its line of bio-rhythm games and the *Astro Lotto*. Johnston Products showed its *Big Top* shooting game/gumball vendor; Movie Hut displayed its sticker machines, *Fun Chicken*, and other coin-op units that dispense prizes.

Pop-A-Shot exhibited *Poppa Pop A Shot* and other models of its popular basketball shooting game.

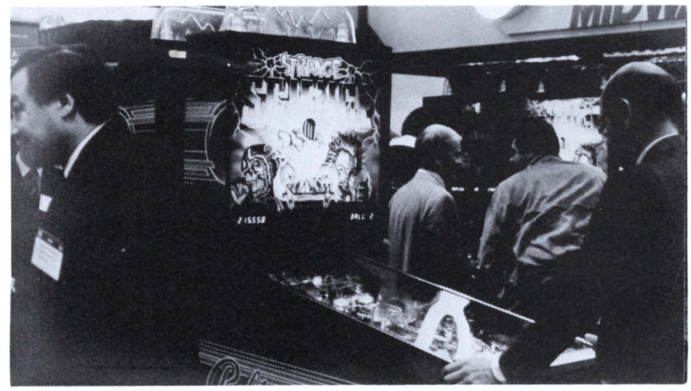
Bob's Space Racers demonstrated its *Can Alley*, *Bowler Roller*, *Whac-A-Mole*, and *Pattie Cakes*.

Meltec displayed *Knock Down*, a game that challenges players to shoot balls at nine cat-rack dolls.

Doyle and Associates showed *Mad Max*, a combination strength tester/boxing game, its *Pro Pitch!* baseball pitching game and *Hoop Shot!* basketball shoot.

Jon Brady of Brady Distributing (from left) and operator Garland Garrett congratulate Cinematronics' Jim Pierce on the company's AMOA showing.

A couple of younger attendees settle down for a session of *Ikari Warriors*.



The U.S. National Video Game Team judged Bally Midway's *Strange Science* the best pinball at the show.

With its many features and current theme, Premier's *Gold Wings* garnered a lot of play.

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Of several pins introduced within a few months before the AMOA Expo, Premier's *Genesis* was the only one to be exhibited at the show.

Premier promoted *Gold Wings* with caps and posters.

Williams' *Pin Bot* lured showgoers.

NSM-Lions' 1987 model *Concert 240* was introduced at the show.

Attendees flocked to Williams' booth to play the company's latest, *Pin Bot.*

Grand Products exhibited its line of velocity-ball system games, including *Grand Baseball*, *Thunder Drome*, and *Four Kings.*

Skee Ball, Inc., exhibited *Skee Ball*, a game enjoyed since 1919. Company representatives said a new home version *Skee Ball* is now available. Grayhound Electronics featured *The Parrot*, a prize-vending machine that has a microprocessor-controlled voice and animation.

In terms of booths space, the industry's major dart-game makers had a strong presence at the AMOA.

IDEA, Inc., displayed its games as well as the NSM-Lowen Cup won by the American team IDEA sponsored in October in Bingen, West Germany. IDEA's Don Devale called the trip to Germany a success.

Merit Industries lined up its *Bull Buster* games alongside the Pub Time line it recently acquired from Nomac in what was probably the most spacious exhibit of the dart manufacturers. It's booth never seemed to be hurting for players. Merit says it has "cleaned its games up," limiting the total selection to eight games.

Arachnid, on the other hand, has added games to its repertoire. Its new 6000 series *Super 6* has Cricket, which, according to *Arachnid*, dart players have been wanting "for the last 10 years." The *Super 6* has a video monitor (to handle the elaborate scoring of the new game) and tilt-out front-door servicing.

Arachnid also had its new *4500 Bud Mark Darts* game on hand. The game is essentially an *English Mark Darts 4500* with new graphics and Budweiser's sponsorship. Anheuser-Busch, maker of Bud, has a large promotional budget, according to Arachnid, and response to the game from Bud distributors has been favorable.

Arachnid also had an array of sportswear and blister-packed accessories and supplies on display as well as the *EMD Dartman*, a computer program to help manage dart leagues.

Valley debuted *Valley Cougar Darts* and *Valley Royal Dartes* as the company makes its entry into the darts market. The games have a variety of features, including an overhead LED score display in team or league format and automatic advance to the next player after three darts have been thrown.

At the show with their pool tables were UBI, Dynamo, Global Billiard, American Shuffleboard, and, of course, Valley. Valley promoted the Valley National 8-Ball League Association and its upcoming international championships in Las Vegas with both printed hand-outs and a video presentation explaining the program to operators.

American Shuffleboard also showed its *Royal* shuffle alleys, and Kel-Chad its unique V-shaped alley, the name

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QUARTET 2

Money Making 2 Player 'Rescue Mission' Challenge

Terrorists from outer space have invaded an earth colony satelite station. A special fighting team is recruited to perform the rescue mission.

QUARTET 2, a highly professional team arrives on the scene to destroy and annihilate the plundering pirates. Each of the four freedom fighters perform in different degrees of jumping skill, speed and shooting power.

Cooperation is the 'key'. Using the 8-way joystick, the jump and shoot buttons, players maneuver the fighting Quartet through various battle stages. In addition to destroying the terrorist enemy, players can capture 'POWER-UP' trophies for extra advantage and point score.

SHOES: Increases player's speed.

A WATCH: Stops the enemy.

A BALL: Increases shooting power of the fighter wearing the same color.

At the end of each stage, a presentation ceremony is held. By destroying the enemy leader who has the key to the exit door, the team can then proceed to the next battle stage.

QUARTET 2 is an exciting 2 player attraction with a great return on investment.

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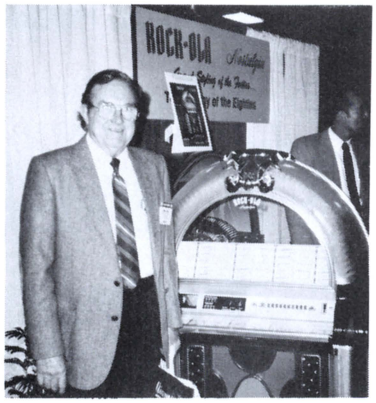
Operators were drawn to Seeburg's booth to get information on the *LaserMusic* compact-disc phonograph.

A placard at Rowe's booth emphasizes the completeness of the company's phonograph line.



Dennis Wester of Wester's Vending & Amusement of Rochester, Ky., likes the looks of Rock-Ola's *Nostalgia* jukebox.

Wurlitzer U.S. representative Jerry Reeves beams over the *One More Time* replica of the company's 1946 *1015 model.*

An attendee checks out Rowe's new antique-replica phonograph.

of which has been changed from *Bank Shuffleboard* to *Shove Penny Shuffleboard.* According to Kel-Chad's Greg Knickrehm, the new name is derived from the game as it was played centuries ago on dinner tables.

Williams introduced its new *Tic Tac Strike* shuffle alley, which adds sound effects and synthesized speech as well as a shuffle-alley version of tic-tac-toe to create a shuffle with a twist. Strikes light tic-tac-toe squares, and players collect points on nine frames. Each strike earns 300 points and lights one square on a tic-tac-toe grid; three strikes lighting up a vertical, horizontal, or diagonal row bring a 900-point bonus. The game also allows standard shuffle-alley games to be played.

Among companies showing table-soccer games were Dynamo, the Italian company Marsilio (the Garlando table soccer), and Premier International, distributor of a "basic foreign model."

Dynamo also showed its air-cushioned hockey table, which the company has announced has been licensed by Brunswick, the originator of *Air Hockey.* Imagination Leisure showed its *SST* air-cushioned table, which has a stainless-steel top, and its *Super-Bowl* bowling-alley game with a 26-inch video screen for scoring and player attraction. Another bowling game of interest was *Bowlingo,* from the previously mentioned Marsilio. The game has an extraordinarily long alley, and the pins are pulled up by strings after they're knocked down.

Innovative Concepts in Entertainment showed its new *Super Chexx,* an improved version of the original *Chexx.* The new model of the hockey game has an unbreakable player shaft, an improved surface, a taller base, and flashing goal lights. The scoreboard has shots-on-goal indicators, a running-time clock, and fluorescent lighting.

Another hockey game was introduced by Championship Games at the show: *Competition Table Hockey.* A two- or four-player model housed in a Lexan-domed cabinet, the game has a "puck-centering" mechanism and a "positive player-drive" mechanism for better control.

Kiddie Rides

Ride Dynamics demonstrated *Starfighter,* one of three Australian-made Bolwell flight-simulator kiddie rides the company is marketing in the U.S. Kiddies of Florida exhibited the *Carousel, Pony,* and other rides from its line.

Carousel International displayed its popular *Knight Rider* car, several motorcycle rides, and the *Mustang Pony.*

Muppets World Amusement Technology demonstrated its

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FEATURES:

- 6" Jumbo Adjustable Claw
- Side Viewing Area Plexiglass - Front View Tempered Glass
- Dual Coin Mechanisms
- Bill Acceptor Included
- Keyed Separately - Large Metal Coin Box
- Mechanical Metered And Extra Long Line Cord
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- Button Or Joystick
- LED Read-Out For Coins And Seconds 15, 30, 45, 60 Seconds Per Game
- Coin Accumulator
- Game Play Option 25¢, 50¢, $1.00, $2.00 Per Game Play

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Giraffe, *Crocodile*, and *Elephant*.

Kiddie Rides U.S.A. showed the *Space Shuttle*, *Super Car*, and *Rainbow Roundabout*, among others.

The Kiddie Ride Exchange exhibited several samples from its line of amusement rides for youngsters.

Specialty machines

AIR-vend's exhibit centered on it A20C AIR-serve tire inflator. The easily recognizable yellow-and-black coin-op unit is used at such stores and service stations as Amoco, Super America, Clark, 7-Eleven, Circle K, Quik Trip, and Oasis. AIR-vend provided literature on its other products, among them the VAC-serv vacuum cleaner.

Standard Metal Typer, Inc., the Chicago company that's been around for 70 years, brought three machines to the AMOA: one new *Classic* model and two rebuilt *Mint* models. The machines are manually operated and are used to imprint custom messages on aluminum disks that have a silver, green, blue, gold, or red finish.

Centek displayed its *Penny Press*, a machine that produces an etched copper souvenir from an ordinary penny. The machine has an oak cabinet, and a variety of messages and designs can be chosen.

Royal Corona built its exhibit around its newest product, the Corona 3000, a 30-amp, seven-foot-long tanning bed that has a token box and an adjustable timer. The bed is equipped with seven German-made fans. A four-speaker stereo-cassette headrest is optional.

Crane supplies

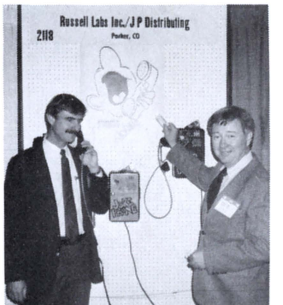
As cranes have grown in popularity, so have the numbers increased of companies supplying all those attractive plush toys that appeal to the child in everyone. Among the companies exhibiting lines of stuffed toys were Ace Novelty, Acme Premium, Dan Brechner & Co., Marvel Trading Co., Nadel & Co., Nancy Sales, Prizes!, Progressive Game Distributors, and Rosette Doll Co.

Plush merchandise variety is endless, from penguins and pandas to teddy bears and turtles. Currently popular cartoon figures are available, including Garfield and the Pink Panther and time-honored favorites like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Even Godzilla and the Tasmanian Devil can be found among the prizes.

Some suppliers offer starter assortments or sample packs from their catalogs in deluxe and premium assortments. Specific prizes can be ordered by the gross or the dozen. Many companies will ship on a weekly or bi-weekly basis a pre-set number of assortment packs. Adjustments can be made when necessary.

The singing group The Girls Next Door sign autographs at Mobile Record Service Company's booth.

Boys try their luck on *Super Bowl* by Imagination Leisure.



Jim Hall (left) and Randy Quinn of Russell Labs show the *Joke Phone*.

A young man tries Doyle & Associates' *Hoop Shot* basketball shoot.

Players at the Bob's Space Racers display try *Whac A Mole* and *Pattie Cakes*.

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FEATURES

- All Viewing Areas Plexiglass
- Dual Coin Mechanisms
- Or Bill Acceptor And Coin Mechanism Optional
- Adjustable Claw - Better Percentages
- Keyed Separately - Large Metal Coin Box
- Fits Through Standard 3'0" x 6'8" Doorway
- Mechanical Meters And Extra Long Line Cord
- Sliding Draw For Extra Prizes In Unit
- Rolling Locking Wheels On Unit
- Deeper Prize Area Holds More Prizes
- Button Or Joystick
- LED Read-Out Coins And Seconds 15, 30, 45, 60, Seconds Per Game Play
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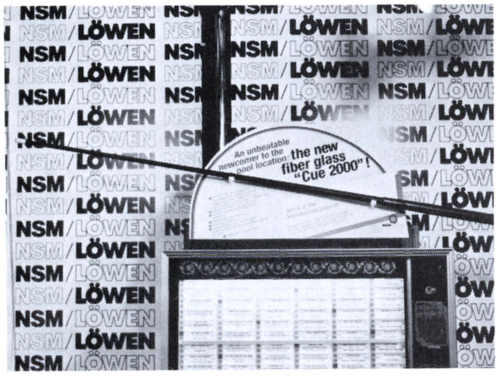
The *Pop A Shot* basketball game always piques player interest.

Skee Ball's booth was manned by Dennis Keaney, Pete Bartola, and Barry Scholl.

At IDEA's booth, the Lowen Cup signals the American team's victory in recent German-American darts competition.



NSM-Lions' *Cue 2000*, a long-lasting fiberglass pool cue, is new to the U.S. but has been popular in Europe for some time.

Point-of-purchase displays of blister-packed dart-game accessories were promoted by Arachnid.

An operator examines the workings of a Valley pool table.

The dart games at Merit Industries' booth got a steady workout.

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Upright Model
With Rowe Bill Acceptors Optional
Height 61″ • Width 23″ • Depth 24″

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Height 21″ • Width 21″ • Depth 22″

FEATURES

- Optional Menu Selection
- Adjustable Win Percentages
- Selectable Cards Or Bears Graphics
- Raise Feature Optional
- Adjustable Minimum Hand To Win
- Adjustable Points Per Play
- Adjustable Coins For Wild Cards
- Adjustable Maximum Bet Feature
- Adjustable Number Discards Per Hand
- Adjustable Bet For Wild Cards
- Progressive Feature Optional
- Hi-Lo Feature Optional
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Great ***JOKER POKER*** Game With Added Deluxe Features In Game Play Which Will Increase Your Income Tremendously

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Prizes can be obtained in sizes from three inches tall to 24 inches tall. Seasonal items such as plush Santas and Valentine hearts are always a hit, as well as footballs and baseballs during the playoffs. Plastic toys and novelty items can be ordered from some suppliers, although plush is number one.

Suppliers at the Expo were eager to give tips to operators on using cranes. Suggestions included steering clear of prizes too large or heavy for a unit's claw to handle, or too small to hold onto; being sure that all the prizes work with your particular crane and fit through the prize-drop door; and staying within manufacturer recommendations for operation. And, of course, always keep the cranes well-stocked with items that are frequently fluffed-up to give the customer a fair opportunity to win and try again.

Support & supply

Although it's the games themselves that steal the spotlight at the AMOA show, the variety of the behind-the-scenes services and equipment make up an impressive part of the exhibition.

This year's AMOA displays had everything from string-cutter kits to hydraulic lifts, with some booths providing information that dealt with topics ranging from consulting services to computer software for route management and league scheduling.

Not surprisingly, money-handling equipment took up a good deal of space at the show. An array of coin- and bill-changing systems were presented by exhibitors such as Ardac, National Currency Systems, and Coin Acceptors. Mars Electronics devoted a substantial part of its booth to showing its new bill-acceptance technology, which allows the use of a bill validator in conjunction with a coin acceptor or in place of it.

Klopp International, the well-known manufacturer of coin-counting and sorting equipment, had a heavily visited booth. Its brochures boasted manual and electric sorters and wrappers that can reduce a two-hour job to as little as 20 minutes. Coin Mechanisms, Inc., passed out a folder thick with spec sheets for products like comparitors, channel assemblies, timer-plate assemblies, coin doors, and coin boxes.

Allstar Music and Northern Amusement both offered software systems designed specifically for amusement operators. Allstar's *"Silent Partner"* is said to handle up to 500 locations and 3,500 machines. Northern Amusement's *"E-Soft Systems,"* designed by Norm Drye, actually contains three packages: a route-management system, a pool-league system, and a dart-league system.

A number of suppliers of parts and accessories had large booths, among them D&R Industries, J-S Sales, and Amusement Emporium. Perhaps the largest was Wico

Williams' *Tic Tac Strike*, a shuffle alley offering a tic-tac-toe game, debuted at the AMOA show.

An American Shuffleboard alley gets some play.

The name-change transition from U.S. Billiards to Imagination Leisure is evident as both banners hang at the company's booth.

THE STAR . . . The Crane with Character

That Works As Good As it Looks!

BUY FACTORY DIRECT If no Distributor Representation in your area.

Shown: Super Single Designed Especially for Convenience Stores.

MODEL	DIMENSIONS	PLUSH CAPACITY
Super Single	36 x 34 x 81	30 Dz.
Single	27 x 34 x 81	20 Dz.
Mini	24 x 34 x 74	15 Dz.
Double	56 x 34 x 81	40 Dz.
Triple	81 x 34 x 81	55 Dz.

THE ORIGINAL HOLLYWOOD CRANE™

Have the Razzle-Dazzle of Hollywood Working for You in Your Hometown!

HOLLYWOOD CRANES . . .

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THE CASABLANCA

SOLID OAK DESIGNER CRANE

Truly a work of art, bringing back memories of a romantic, glamourous bygone era.

Rich solid oak finishing is complemented by artistic etchings on side glass and back mirror (the photo cannot do justice to its intricately beautiful craftsmanship). All accentuated by a detailed stained glass marquee. The elegance of this machine becomes the spotlight of any location!

The Casablanca is excellent for hotel lobbys, restaurants, nightclubs and all other areas of tasteful decor and decorum that would never consider a crane before.

Thanks to our extensive research and attention to detail, we've come up with another winner! Collection reports verify it!

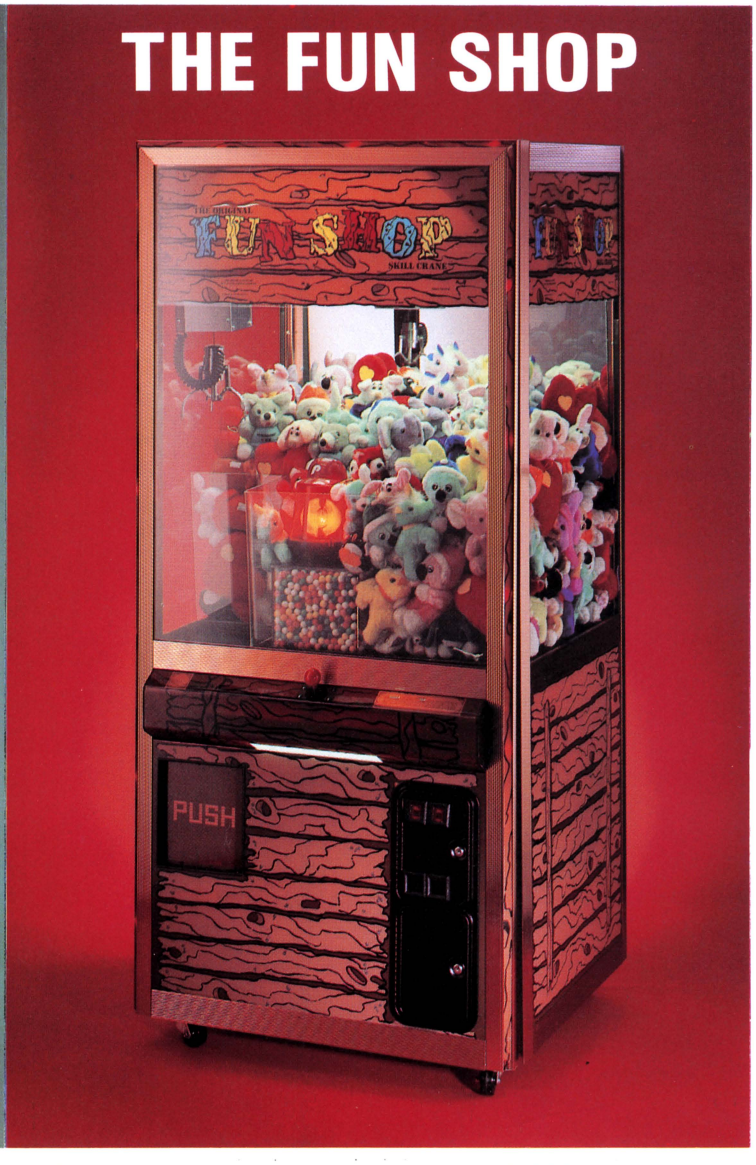
The ultimate in stylishness — you probably will want one in your own home!

Dimensions: 33 x 33½ x 78

Hollywood Crane Merchandisers, Inc. is proud to present its line of beautifully crafted, superbly constructed cranes.

Any location is immediately enhanced when our cranes are installed — the only cranes on the market with such an array of styles and features that add beauty, character, reliability and profits all together! And we are competitively priced!

THE FUN SHOP



SUPPORTING ACTOR TO THE ORIGINAL HOLLYWOOD

Here is a unique machine that speaks for itself.

Attractive and beautifully crafted with fun looking designer artwork that really stands out and is recognized at any location.

Stimulates interest and maximizes income potential.

Available in same model types and sizes with all options as the Original Hollywood Crane.

WRAP-AROUND 4-SIDED VIEWING

GREAT EXPOSURE . . . CATCH THEIR EYES, COMING AND GOING!

Designed especially for high volume store front window space. Convenience stores love this model! Ideal for any center of the room placement. Available in the Original Hollywood, the Fun Shop, and the Monster models.

THE MONSTER with Monster Profits

DIMENSIONS: The Monster (shown) 56x48x81 Super Monster 96x50x81
PLUSH SIZE: The Monster 4″—18″ Super Monster 4″—22″

STANDARD FEATURES:

1. Double-door high-security redemption chute.
2. Illuminated control panel.
3. 1/4″ Double-strength tempered glass.
4. Full control joystick operation.
5. Five large rotating attract lights.
6. Convenient one-door entry.
7. Win cycle with win meter.
8. Front and rear chaser lights with theme graphic inlays.
9. Double entry coin door system with security lock box.
10. All metal inner construction.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE:

Wrap-around 4-sided viewing.
Rowe $1 and $5 acceptor.
Gumball dispenser.

Not even we knew the potential of this crane!

The Monster was designed with Amusement Parks in mind — but because we were launching this machine as a surprise to the industry, Hollywood Crane Merchandising, Inc. had to be careful of its testing exposure. The Monster was tested at a small Miniature Golf Course and the income was many times greater than expected. We now know The Monster has a marvelous earning potential anywhere... truck stops, family centers, bus stations, amusement parks, airports, malls, etc.

Large product is the key. At $1 per play it is obvious how profitable and enticing The Monster can be. The Monster dispenses product that is 'oohed and aahed' by everyone. And we do mean everyone! No one can walk by without spending a dollar — not even you!

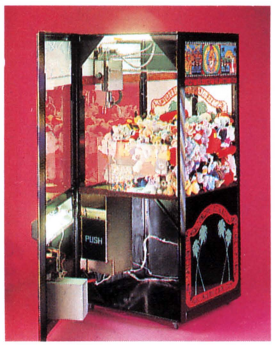
And get this - average product cost is less and profits are greater than on 25-cent vending machines!

Hollywood Cranes with Character

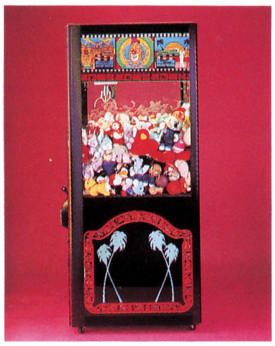
Side by side testing proves that when compared to the other leading cranes on the market today, Hollywood Cranes are capable of at least a 50% earnings advantage over all the others.

Setting Up Distributorships Now!

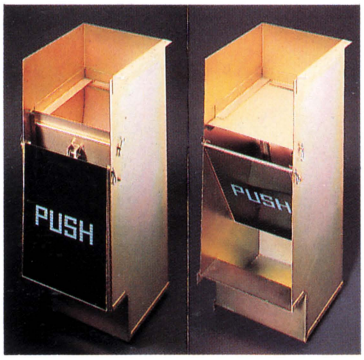
OPTIONS AVAILABLE:



Convenient One-Door Entry.
All metal construction.
Ample plush storage below.



Tempered Glass.
With beautiful, eye-catching designer graphics.



Our Very Own Patented High-Security Redemption Chute.
Makes it absolutely impossible to rip-off product which is a major problem in the crane industry today.

Win Cycle with Win Meter and Attract Mode.
Gumball or prize dispenser (optional).

Chaser Lights
Chasing behind Movie Strip Graphics provides a magnificent illusion that stops the crowd and is the talk of the location.

Quality Features which separate Hollywood Cranes from the competition:

- ★ Big plush capacity which stimulates sales and eliminates unnecessary refilling time. By the time the machine is empty, the cash box is full.
- ★ Extensive research and development.
- ★ Requires 80% less labor than the leading competition.
- ★ Heavy duty steel construction for years of durability (built like a vending machine, not a video game).
- ★ Mechanism is adjustable to reach everything in playfield area.
- ★ Designer graphic artwork.
- ★ Locking casters.
- ★ Full 1-year or 40,000 plays factory warranty on all moving parts.
- ★ On-field service kit optional—includes all parts necessary to repair game immediately; eliminates down time.
- ★ PLUS, we are your plush resource.
- ★ Built for today, tomorrow and beyond—Integrated features for future enhancements.
- ★ East & West Coast distribution and assembly plants save you money on shipping charges and assures you of fast delivery service.

Illuminated Control and Instruction Panel with Joystick.
Really enhances machine—Also ideal for nightclubs.

Double Entry Coin Door System.
What other crane manufacturers offer you these features? Just another reason why Hollywood Crane is the only choice.

Rowe Bill Acceptor.
Accepts $1 and $5 bills.

HOLLYWOOD CRANES

Best Looking — Most Durable — Definitely the Cranes to attract customers and earnings!
There are no more choices, no more challengers . . . the "runners up" can't compare!
Side-by-side testing proves that Hollywood Cranes are in a class by themselves.
The Hollywood Cranes earn 2-3 times more than any other leading cranes.

HOLLYWOOD CRANE MERCHANDISERS, INC.

Manufacturers of Cranes with Character that Work as Good as they Look.

WEST COAST MANUFACTURING & DISTRIBUTION
8044 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91605
(818) 767-0981 / (800) 99-2-CASH

EAST COAST ASSEMBLY & DISTRIBUTION
1122 Ninth Street, Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 946-4040

Adults and youngsters get a feel for *Dynamo Hockey.*

Super Chexx, an improved version of *Chexx*, was introduced by Innovative Concepts in Entertainment.

David Vega (left) and Eric Torres display a line of kiddie rides by Kiddies of Florida.

Bob Burakovsky of Muppets World (from left) with Guy Lofaso and Doc Lofaso of J.C. Enterprises of Irvine, Calif.

Rob Schlup (left) and Brad Veatch of Carousel show a young driver and his dad the *Knight Rider* car.

An operator checks prize supplies at Nadel & Sons Toy Corp.'s booth.

Another astronaut at the controls of the Kiddie Rides U.S.A. *Space Shuttle.*

A little girl enjoys the Kiddie Rides U.S.A. *Rainbow Roundabout.*

Corporation, whose six-booth space had room for everything from items like material-handling equipment, monitors, and power supplies to what has become the traditional presence of Monk the monkey and his private photographer.

Vending equipment

Rock-Ola and Rowe were among those exhibiting vending equipment. Rowe showed its coffee machine with low-calorie sweetener and its 448-E food merchandiser with a new bill acceptor. Rock-Ola displayed its line of cold-drink machines. National Vendors had one of its Refreshtron snack and cold-drink merchandisers on display and handed out ample sales literature on that line as well as its Snacktron line.

Among the more interesting vending items at the show was the Video Vendor machine for renting video-cassette movies. Video club members use a credit card or member number to access the machine, then choose a movie and pay the rental fee. The average transaction takes one minute. When the customer places the movie back in the machine, it is automatically returned to the correct slot. Customer accounts may be established, and the machine also can be used to sell movies as well as such items as blank tapes, head cleaners, and laser discs. The machine holds 320 movies in either Beta or VHS format.

Pay phones

Only a modest number of pay phones made their way to the exhibit floor. American Pay Phone Systems called itself the first private pay-phone company to sell products designed by Bell. Its phone is a retrofit kit put out by U.S. West Enterprises (formerly Northwestern Bell Technologies). Among the advantages listed for the phone are that full installation and maintenance service are provided by AT&T. The phone is said to "troubleshoot itself," or, as one person put it, "it calls in when its sick."

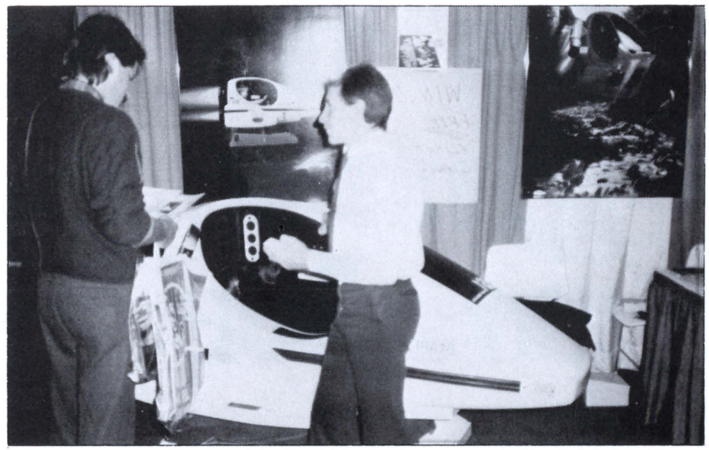
Digitronics Manufacturing and Network Paystations also displayed pay phones, and Williams Telephone, a subsidiary of Williams Electronics, promoted its Wiltelco 6000 unit that accepts coins and credit cards. Intellical Pay Telephone Systems showed its Omnicall coin/credit card phone as well.

A young astronaut and a driver try rides by Kiddie Rides U.S.A.

Tim Prize of Centek demonstrates his pressed-penny souvenir machine.

Ace Novelty Co. displays plush prizes. The Wedges/Ledges *Challenger* crane is at left.

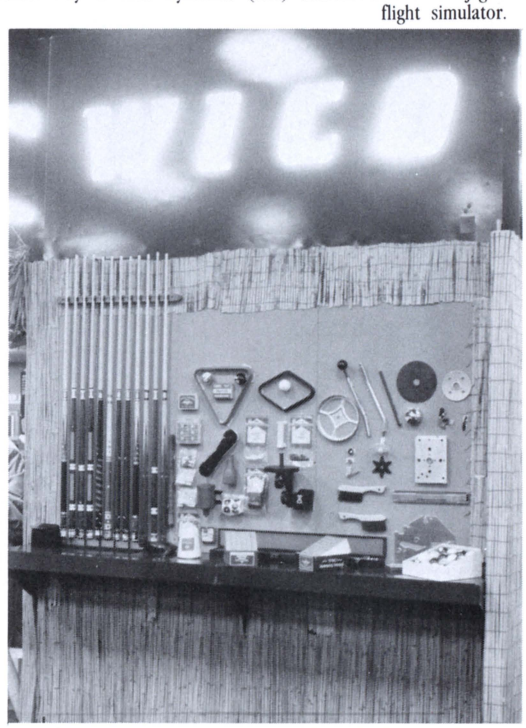
Rich Bartlett of R&M Distributing of W. Hempstead, N.Y., (left) checks plush items from the Rosette Doll Co.



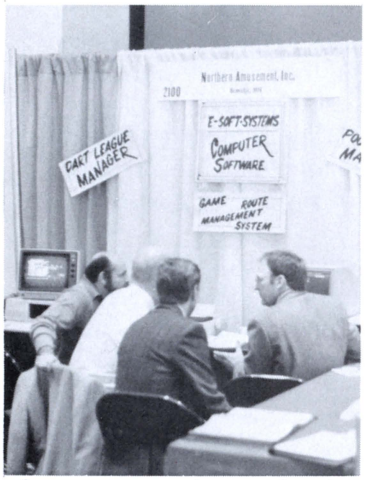
Michael Way of Ride Dynamics (left) demonstrates the *Starfighter* flight simulator.

Attendees view large plush items available from Prizes!

Bob Portale of Prizes! mans the booth.



These products comprised one of many Wico displays at the show, as the company had one of the largest booths.



Operators get an explanation of Northern Amusement's E-Soft-Systems software.

Operators seek information on plush prizes at ACME Premium's booth.

Wico's Craig Horwitz (left) and the company's president, Ed Sokolofski, pose with Wico's show mascot, Monk.

In the crane game, winners make players

BY BONNIE THEARD

Marty Kasper (left) and Mike Silverstein of Dan Brechner & Co., Inc.

"Winners make players," said Mike Silverstein of Dan Brechner & Co., Inc., at the company's booth at the AMOA show.

"You have to spend money to make money on cranes," added Silverstein, Brechner sales manager of the southwest. "If operators spend on the stock, they will be successful. Most operators want customers to be happy. Here at the show we've been talking to operators, telling them to put good prizes in their machines and let the customers win a little."

On a convention floor crowded with coin-op equipment, merchandisers and prize suppliers stood out this year. Including Dan Brechner, nine suppliers exhibited plush toys, far and away the most sought-after merchandiser items for widespread appeal and color.

The number of cranes and suppliers was not surprising, because crane and rotary merchandisers have become increasingly popular in the past two years. The ranks of machine manufacturers, distributors, and supply companies has grown along with product interest.

Silverstein echoes the good reports from crane operators. "Cranes have not shown any drop in revenue . . . in some locations a crane outdoes a whole arcade.

"Customers are constantly looking for new items," he said. "They want variety. It's best to put from 10 to 30 different items in the crane in various price ranges, from 18 cents each up to $18 per dozen. The swing is going from cheaper goods to more expensive goods. Seasonal plush prizes are very popular, and any type of animal figures."

Dan Brechner, which offers a 50-page catalog of prizes, has been in business for more than 60 years with a product line of toys, gifts, novelties, and souvenirs. Headquarters are in Floral Park, N.Y.

"If we keep the variety and assortments up," Silverstein said, "we feel we'll keep our customers."

The video jukebox was introduced to Italians at this impressive display staged by Paolo Maggiaolli at the ENADA show.

EUROPE BEGINS EXHIBITION SEASON

BY DAVID SNOOK

Europe kicked off its season of coin-machine exhibitions with what one might describe as the sublime and the ridiculous. While at the Annual Associated Leisure Preview in London there was a marked reluctance to buy slot machines pending legislative changes, the Italians at the annual ENADA (Esposizione Nazionale Apparecchie Divertimento Automatici) in Rome demonstrated their blatant love of plagiarism.

The ENADA show held in the Palazzo dei Congressi October 9-12 proved an uncomfortable foray for any American or Japanese game originator, but expectedly so. The Italian laws on copying, or total lack of them, have long since resulted in chaos every time someone develops any game of consequence.

Copies abound from the reasonable to the awful, and it is common to find as many as 30 of one game floating around the exhibition hall. The Italian copiers display a marked lack of interest, an almost comic arrogance, toward any irate originator who might be foolish enough to protest.

This year was little different. In fact, when we pointed out to one company that its games appeared to be blatant copies, we received an indignant and hotly aired denial: "We always show the genuine game in our booth at the show, but we sell the copy games outside." With that kind of unbelievable naivete, what chance has justice?

Amid the resulting chaos shone the brief odd oasis of sanity, such as Sega's *Out Run*, with its cabinet so much a part of the game that there is little point in copying it; the cabinet would cost so much to build that the prospective buyer might just as well buy an original.

There were 64 booths with some respectable names among them, such as Hantarex, the monitor producers; Maggi Coniature, with its tokens and Coin Controls acceptors; and Paolo Maggiaolli, perhaps the best-known Italian trade personality on the international market, concentrating on the British-built video jukebox.

The Italians excel at producing kiddie rides, and there was a strong section of these at the show, but the much-loved pinballs perhaps provided the most to talk about. Premier showed *Genesis*, which already is familiar to U.S. operators but is building a strong reputation in Europe. Technoplay produced *Scramble*, a strong game said to be destined for great things in the U.S. market. It has a motorcycle theme with ramps to secondary playfields, carrying topruns with spirals for multi-ball action.

Zaccaria, one of the strongest names in Italian games manufacturing and one that in recent years has had financial crises to cope with, showed *Zankor*. A four-player pinball with speech synthesis available in English, Italian, German, and French, the game was not rated as particularly strong.

The new pinballs, *Out Run*, and the introduction of the video jukebox were the main features of this years ENADA, apart from the outrageous copies.

For the organizers, the Italian trade association SAPAR, the show was rated a success. Dr. Maurizio Maneschi, the association's secretary, said that with around 2,000 visitors and reports of reasonable sales, the show was successful.

There were few international visitors, perhaps testifying to the fact that Italy is no longer a strong innovator of games. Some came from other European countries, and the only visitors from the U.S. were Shane Breaks of Atari Games and Mireille Chevalier, director of foreign sales for Merit Industries, Exidy, and Embassy Electronics.

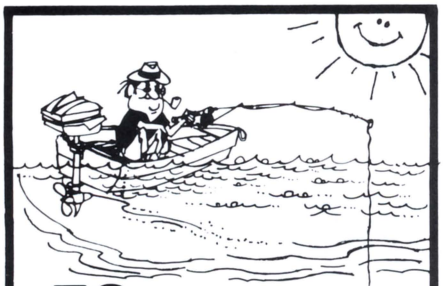
Meanwhile, in London, the Associated Leisure Preview was set on a much higher note.

Mireille Chevalier, director of foreign sales for Merit Industries, Exidy, and Embassy Electronics, Visits a booth at the ENADA exhibition.

Zaccaria's new *Zankor* pinball was introduced at the ENADA exhibition in Rome.

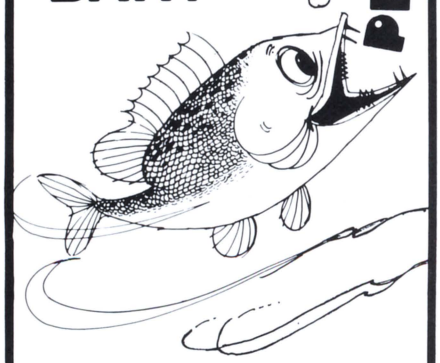
Overseeing the British debut of Sega's *Out Run* at the London Preview are (from left) Colin Mallery, Sega Europe's Vic Leslie, Barry Thompson, Bob Deith, and Gary Newman. All except Leslie are of Sega's U.K. distributor Deith Leisure.

In the past 12 months the British coin-machine industry has seen a considerable revival in its fortunes since the disasters of the video rise and fall of 1979-81. After five years in the doldrums, presumably while operators paid off the debts they rolled up in those heady days, the British industry began to perk up at the Preview held in October 1985. The signs of revival prevalent then



TO CATCH THE BIG ONES... YOU GOTTA USE THE BEST BAIT!

PLAY METER



ADVERTISE IN PLAY METER

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Gerald Steinberg of Joyland Distributing (left) and Shane Breaks of Atari Games have their hands on the wheel of Atari's *Championship Sprint* at the London Preview.

were repeated around the international marketplace and have continued apace.

Fifty-odd booths at the Novotel in London's Hammersmith, therefore, are regarded as a barometer of the trade's fortunes for the following 12 months. The show started as a "fill-in" to give manufacturers' production lines a boost in the dull season between the end of one seaside-arcades boom period and the next. From that arcades flavor, however, the preview has evolved into something far more strong, a mid-term taster of what is to come for the more influential street locations.

Traditionally, some buying is done at the Preview, but it is used mainly as a prototype testing ground prior to the "proper" launch of new equipment at the world's largest coin-machine exhibition, the Amusement Trades Exhibition International at London's Olympia in mid-January.

And the Preview did well; with an enthusiastic outlook, a confident air, and unforced smiles all round from the salesmen. The only sour note, if it can be called that, was that the mainstay of the British trade, its slot machines, are on a go-slow awaiting new government rulings on updating maximum permitted stakes and prizes.

There are 140,000 slot machines in the United Kingdom, most of them in pubs or street locations, and in the heavily policed market there are strict government limits to the maximum amount paid into a machine for a game and the top prize that may be awarded. Every three years the limits are reviewed and, generally, raised. The trade is traditionally told of the result of the review at the convention of its trade association in early December. There then is a two-month wait for implementation of the new levels. Into that waiting period comes the big London show at Olympia. So from October-November onward, the sales of slots generally nosedive because the stakes and prize levels on those machines shortly will be outdated.

One of Italy's leading distributors of video games, Domenico "Mimo" Golfi (left) holds the attention of David Wilcox of Associated Leisure Sales at the ENADA show in Rome.

That is what happened at this year's Preview. The effect on the trade was not serious, as from early December manufacturers will be able to build for stock to the new limits, and some operators will place orders at ATEI ready for the deadline to be reached for implementation. Nevertheless, the trade association is pressing the government for earlier implementation to help the flow of production.

So the waiting period did not particularly damage the air of euphoria surrounding the Preview. And the arrival of new games fresh from the Japanese exhibition, and one or two from the U.S. ahead of their AMOA launch, added spice.

The two main games from Tokyo, Sega's *Out Run* and Konami's *WEC LeMans*, two outstanding driving games, made major impacts, while Nintendo's *VS. Slalom* looked likely to provide a major breakthrough for the company in the U.K. and other European markets.

With the big Spanish show, the ATEI in London in January, the German IMA exhibition, and France's Forainexpo still to come, Europe looks likely to provide its usual checkerboard of aspirations achieved and failed.

PLAY METER

EUROPEAN INDUSTRY DIFFERS

BY DAVID SNOOK

Someone once wrote that it was the ancient Greeks who invented the coin machine (a stone-token-operated water-vending device) a couple of thousand years ago. The Europeans still like their coin machines and can be just as inventive as then.

And the European coin-machine business is distinctly different from that familiar to the American operator. In fact, it is different from country to country in Europe, just as coin-machine ideology varies between the New World and the Far East.

Video games, jukeboxes, pinballs, and pool tables are immensely popular throughout Europe, where the operators often have the additional advantage of legalized slot machines.

Now that may be pure anathema to the American operator, mortally wounding his sense of decency and outraging his awareness of the proprieties, but the fact is that his European counterpart may often run slots alongside his video games, perfectly happily, quite acceptably, and very, very profitably.

In articles I wrote for this publication as long as 10 years ago, I pointed out that there's nothing wrong with slots provided they are adequately policed and their stakes and prizes are modest enough to dissuade a gambling charge. Even at levels of 14 cents input and maximum prizes of $4.20, British pub owners reap huge profits from slots. So do the West Germans and the Spaniards.

In Europe, therefore, an operator may gain permission to locate his machines in a bar or a hotel and site a slot machine, a video game, a pool table, and a jukebox all under the same roof. In some countries he's allowed a straight share of the profits, but in others the law permits only a rental system for gambling machines.

Whichever way around it is, the extra slot machine "string to the operating bow" means that the average British, West German, Spanish, or Dutch operator is considerably better off than his American counterpart.

It does not follow, however, that all countries in Europe permit all kinds of coin machines.

In France, for example, there have been fierce, typically Gallic infatuations with slots in recent years. Officially they are illegal but, again typically Gallic, they are taxed by the government. Upheavals resulted in the banning of French slot machines in 1985. Pinball, pool, and video games remain particularly strong, though.

Belgium is a curious oddity. It, too, banned slot machines after many years of use and abuse, but in so doing permitted bingo machines to remain. These pinball look-alikes are notoriously simple to operate in a gambling fashion, and most countries banned them out of hand years ago. Again, pinball and video games are popular.

The Netherlands is another country with loose laws on slots, most interpreted by individual mayors in each town. The result has been that some areas have permitted slots as we know them, others have allowed them without payout facilities, elsewhere with credit meters only. A

new law to tidy up the situation was to go into effect December 1 to officially permit slot machines to rank alongside the already popular but decidedly subservient video games, pinball, pool, and phonographs.

Denmark has a limited slots situation permitting video games to reign supreme, while Sweden was once a high-profile slots country that banned them when things got out of hand. Norway was in a similar situation, while Finland gave a government monopoly the sole right to operate slot machines with the proceeds going to charities. In all the Scandinavian countries, videos and pool dominate. Iceland allows slots only for the Red Cross to run and derive profits from.

West Germany is one of the stronger European coin-machine countries, with a powerful market for all categories of machines. Its slots are curious wall-mounted complexities, heavily policed and therefore scrupulously "straight." Its video games are severely limited to non-violent games, which inhibits the Japanese and American innovators. Pool is very strong, but so are pinballs and jukeboxes.

Austria has limited slots facilities depending upon the inclination of the relevant area where one wishes to site them, while music, pool, and games dominate. Switzerland, similarly, voted by canton (district) on whether to permit slots, and most of them are currently against, while the non-payout games remain popular.

In Italy, pinball, table soccer, video games, pool, and music dominate entirely, and in Portugal the situation is pretty much the same. Spain has had some violent love affairs and divorces with slots in recent years before the government eventually cleaned things up, and a thriving slots-operating business now exists with the other

SupaTrack **is a typical British slot machine, which is allowed a maximum stake of 10 pence (14 cents) and a maximum payout of three pounds ($4.20).**

categories of machines as back-up.

In the United Kingdom there is another strong slots community, heavily policed and totally un-infiltrated by shadier elements. The brewery-owned pub system ensures some massive operations, with two companies each holding about 26,000 pieces in operation and several others running into the thousands. Video, pool, music, and pinball all are strong in supporting roles, although pinball is at a lower level than in other countries of a similar size because, for some unaccountable reason, in the U.K. a pinball machine is considered a gambling device.

Ireland has legalized slots at the very low level of just four cents input with a top prize of 70 cents.

The net conclusion to all this is that where slots are well policed, with well defined, workable laws, with low inputs and minor payouts, criminal elements are disinterested, the public likes them, and they are a useful earner for national treasuries. Where disasters have occurred is in countries failing to observe these rules.

Curiously, gray-area games have had little impact in Europe. While a running battle has ensued in the U.S. over video card games, Europe has seen little of the same kind of abuse, except perhaps in Ireland.

Video games undoubtedly are the stronger of the universally acceptable games, with an innate strength only as powerful as the respective countries' ability to control copies. Pinball probably is second, with pool third, and the humble jukebox in the fourth, position.

Of current standings it also is reasonable to suggest that in most European countries the video disasters of 1981-82, which came slightly later in the U.S., are now just about paid for and the upturn in the industry's fortunes on an international basis, which more or less began with the last January's ATEI, is a general pattern.

Payout quizzes thrive in U.K.

BY DAVID SNOOK

It was as long ago as the late 1960s that I first remember seeing amusement games built around general-knowledge quiz themes. They came back in various forms over the years, but never made any considerable impact, mainly because of an inability to reprogram quickly and adequately enough.

Even the *Fax* game, developed by Exidy on the eve of what was to be a boom and bust in quiz games in the U.S., did not do anything like as much as its successors.

And is the "fad" now over? The remaining manufacturers of video quiz games might argue, but few would dispute that the cream in the market has gone.

But there is one overseas country in which the quiz game, suitably modified, threatens to make a long-lasting impact that few of its originators could possibly have foreseen.

A little more than a year ago in the United Kingdom, someone turned a video quiz game into a slot machine. They put a payout on it, and the British industry's governing body, the Gaming Board, issued a statement that in its opinion the quiz game with a payout did not constitute a gambling device. The game, therefore, was not subject to the U.K.'s strict controls over slots.

At this stage a dangerous situation existed. There was ostensibly nothing to prevent anyone from developing games providing for stakes as high as $5 and prizes of as much as $5,000, or even more if the machine's hoppers could hold the cash. The breweries were interested, naturally, as they own the majority of the country's 75,000 pubs, most of which are equipped with profitable slot machines, video games, pool tables, and jukeboxes.

The huge profits made by the breweries from the coin-machine interests (the most profitable, slot machines, are permitted to operate only on a rental basis, with the brewery taking the lion's share of the profits) comprise a high percentage of brewery income; some people estimate it as much as 60 percent of net overall profits.

So of course they were interested, and so were the 1,000 or so operators who supply coin machines to those breweries. After all, with only one slot per pub and as many other coin machines as most would support already in place, the market was fairly saturated. Expansion, therefore, could come only from other types of coin machines being introduced that could operate

alongside those already in pubs without affecting their takes.

And it was already established that only 10 percent of the average pub's clientele played coin machines, and only 10 percent of them played both quiz games and slots. The quiz game, therefore, had found a new marketplace.

And when a payout was placed on it . . .

The great danger was that payouts on quiz games could be so high that they would dwarf payments permitted on slots (three pounds or $4.20), and it was imperative that the position of the slot machine not be undermined. The quiz game might attract a different kind of player, but if the payout were large enough, then the regular slots player might be tempted to switch allegiance.

There also was the danger that massive jackpots in pubs might attract bad publicity leading to a public outcry and subsequent legislation that might not apply only to quiz games. The U.K. has a history of fast gambling legislation tending to roll everything into the same pot with pretty disastrous results for the industry.

Tactically, therefore, it was necessary for someone to step in and get things into perspective. Once the gaming board officially washed its hands of the whole affair by denying that quiz games with payouts were its responsibility, the trade association took a hand. The British Amusement Catering Trades Association (BACTA) at its annual convention last December adopted a resolution that it would call upon all manufacturers, distributors, and operators to observe maximums of 20-pence (28 cents) stakes and 10-pound ($14) prizes.

Those parameters have been strictly adhered to by an industry acutely aware of the importance of not killing the goose that lays the golden egg. A purely homespun (with one or two notable exceptions)

The *Trivia Trail* and *Question Time* are typical examples of SWPs (skill games with prizes), quiz games offering payouts of as much as 10 pounds ($14).

manufacturing industry has grown up as a result. Several thousand SWPs (skill games with prizes) already have gone into the market with varying degrees of success. Coinmaster is generally recognized as the leading brand in the field, with JPM and Barcrest (two strong slot-machine manufacturers) also tilting for business. Status Games is the only U.S. manufacturer to have successfully lived in this hotbed of British innovation, while several smaller manufacturers are working away at the tail end of the market.

In operation, the SWP has proven very successful. It is not as big a moneymaker as the slot machine, but on most sites it is outperforming the video game. Most important of all, its takes are not hitting those of the other equipment in the same establishments. Virtually all of its locations are what the U.S. trade would call street locations. There has been a much-publicized example of teams of Oxford undergraduates touring the pubs and milking the machines by having among their ranks an expert in each subject, but this has been largely overcome by manufacturers injecting a speed-up device to the games after initial successes are scored.

The major operators are convinced that the SWP is here to stay, and other games of a non-quiz, but still skill, variety have been emerging to expand the market. Effectively, the British street operator's long-awaited fifth string to his bow to add to slots, videos, pool, and jukeboxes has arrived.

PLAY·METER NATIONAL POLL

The following are rankings of the top games in the coin-operated amusement industry. The games are ranked according to an index formulated from a regular survey of operators of coin-operated amusement equipment. Games not appearing on this poll either (1) did not generate a five percent response or (2) did not rank among the top 50 games in the country. The games are further identified by their general equipment classification type: Video, Pinball, and Novelty. The average index rating for all surveyed games for this individual survey was 80.

TOP TEN GAMES

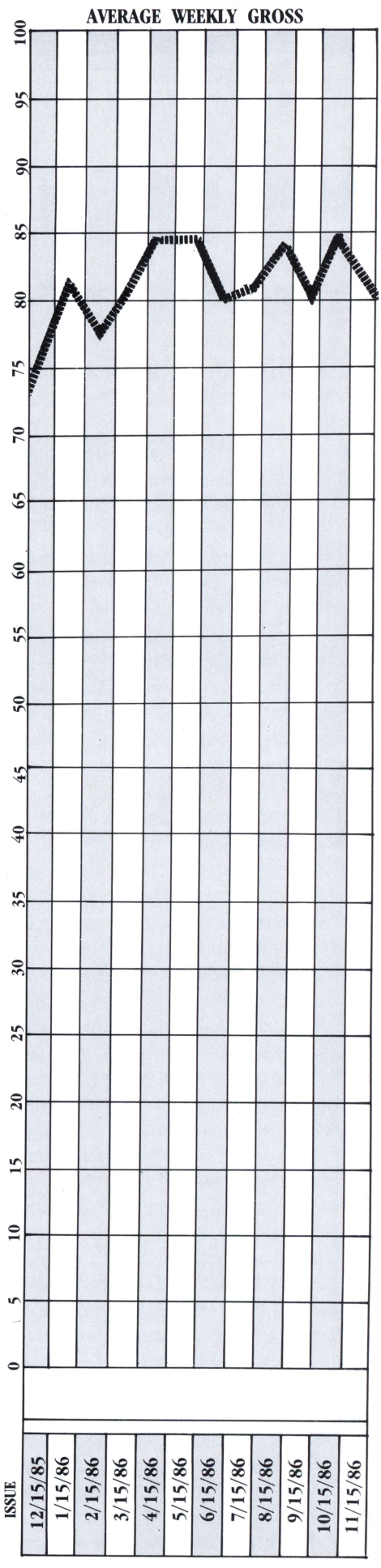
1	***Championship Sprint*** ATARI	292
2	***Gauntlet II*** ATARI	268
3	***Enduro Racer*** SEGA	253
4	***Rampage*** BALLY MIDWAY	229
5	***Ikari Warriors*** TRADE WEST	173
6	***Quartet*** SEGA	169
7	***Gauntlet*** ATARI	160
8	***Speed Buggy*** DATA EAST	153
9	***Hang-On(upright)*** SEGA	151
10	***High Speed*** WILLIAMS	145

NOTICE

The sole purpose of this survey is to determine on a regular basis the top performing games in the country. Any attempt to use the results of this survey for any other purpose is unauthorized, wrongful, and misleading.

	Game/Manufacturer	Nov. 15	Oct. 15	Sept. 15	Aug. 15	Video	Pinball	Novelty
1	***Championship Sprint/Atari***	292	-	-	-	V	-	-
2	***Gauntlet II/Atari***	268	241	-	-	V	-	-
3	***Enduro Racer/Sega***	253	258	283	-	V	-	-
4	***Rampage/Bally Midway***	229	276	-	-	V	-	-
5	***Ikari Warriors/Trade West***	173	163	166	260	V	-	-
6	***Quartet/Sega***	169	-	155	300	V	-	-
7	***Gauntlet/Atari***	160	145	141	175	V	-	-
8	***Speed Buggy/Data East***	153	-	137	207	V	-	-
9	***Hang-On(upright)/Sega***	151	178	177	129	V	-	-
10	***High Speed/Williams***	145	143	165	140	-	P	-
11	***Rygar/Tecmo***	131	192	108	180	V	-	-
12	***Gimme A Break/Bally Sente***	127	-	50	-	V	-	-
13	***Gladiator/Taito***	126	114	110	99	V	-	-
14	***Hollywood Heat/Premier***	126	124	130	128	-	P	-
15	***Arkanoid/Romstar Taito***	126	159	143	-	V	-	-
16	***World Series, The Season/Cinematronics***	119	131	123	135	V	-	-
17	***Mania Challenge/Memetron Taito***	118	155	144	113	V	-	-
18	***Temple of Doom/Atari***	114	117	94	116	V	-	-
18	***Paperboy/Atari***	114	89	102	145	V	-	-
20	***Road King/Williams***	113	110	93	-	-	P	-
20	***Hang-On(mini)/Sega***	112	127	-	143	V	-	-
20	***Play Choice-10/Nintendo***	111	83	111	-	V	-	-
23	***Wonder Boy/Sega***	107	127	80	-	V	-	-
24	***Ghosts 'N Goblins/Romstar Taito***	105	119	94	97	V	-	-
25	***Road Runner/Atari***	102	-	85	-	V	-	-

	Game/Manufacturer	Nov. 15	Oct. 15	Sept. 15	Aug. 15	Video	Pinball	Novelty
26	*Mini Golf/Bally Sente*	99	80	55	69	V	-	-
27	*Comet/Williams*	97	92	115	84	-	P	-
28	*Trojan/Romstar*	94	89	61	69	V	-	-
29	*Tokio/Romstar Taito*	92	120	57	-	V	-	-
30	*Alley Master/Cinematronics*	90	-	105	-	V	-	-
31	*Grand Lizard/Williams*	90	-	147	-	-	P	-
32	*Cheyenne/Exidy*	88	73	87	111	V	-	-
33	*Space Shuttle/Williams*	88	81	89	80	-	P	-
33	*Hat Trick/Bally Sente*	88	0	63	88	V	-	-
33	*Space Harrier(sitdown)/Sega*	87	-	-	-	V	-	-
36	*Pole Position II/Atari*	86	106	86	91	V	-	-
37	*English Mark Darts/Arachnid*	85	37	37	23	-	-	N
37	*Sorcerer/Williams*	85	59	77	58	-	P	-
39	*VS. Super Mario Bros./Nintendo*	85	83	97	104	V	-	-
40	*The Legend of Kage/Taito*	84	149	80	75	V	-	-
40	*Raven/Premier*	83	124	104	-	-	P	-
42	*Spy Hunter/Bally Midway*	82	92	88	100	V	-	-
43	*Combat/Exidy*	82	-	103	-	V	-	-
43	*Eight Ball Champ/Bally Midway*	79	60	58	68	-	P	-
45	*Break Thru/Data East*	77	67	70	107	V	-	-
45	*Tic Tac Trivia/Merit*	76	68	154	71	V	-	-
47	*Komani GT/Konami*	75	-	105	-	V	-	-
48	*Big Event Golf/Taito*	75	129	53	-	V	-	-
49	*Pole Position/Atari*	74	73	88	76	V	-	-
49	*Terra Cresta/Nichibutsu*	74	133	50	98	V	-	-



SAVING MONEY ON CAR EXPENSES

by Frank "The Crank" Seninsky

Whether you have a large, medium, or small route, chances are that your employees must drive cars, vans, or pick-up trucks. Car-insurance rates have increased dramatically, and the time put into record-keeping (maintenance, claims, repairs, gas and oil reimbursements) can be much better spent either taking care of your locations or getting new ones.

Coping with our car insurance and the related forms became so complicated that I had one of my best managers spending half his work week on it (35 vehicles were involved). We were forced into raising our collision deductible to $500. In some months the company shelled out an additional $1,000 for two accidents, meanwhile quaking at the thought of the rates going up further next year.

Here is an example that could put you out of business. A married employee drives his "baby sitter" home (let's not get into what was going on between them, drinking or otherwise) in a company van during non-business hours. (Company autos are not allowed for personal use, and, according to the strictest interpretation of our policy, non-employee passengers are prohibited.) An accident occurs in which the company might, and that's a pretty slim might, pay up to $1,000 in medical payments.

Who would be liable in this case to pay a multi-million-dollar award? You guessed it: the owner of the vehicle.

We finally decided that each employee should own his own vehicle. The company would continue to own and maintain its two big delivery trucks and keep one car as a spare. We worked out a formula according to which a specified amount would be paid to the employee for each day or part of a day that his vehicle would be used for company business. The employee would be responsible for his own gas, insurance, maintenance, and repairs.

At first there were many objections, along with rumors of mass resignations, but as the advantages and disadvantages were weighed, all but one employee approved the policy.

According to the formula, $16 a day, or $4,000 a year, (250 working days) is paid to each route employee. This works out to about 16 cents a mile based on 25,000 working miles a year. An additional 10 cents is paid for each mile driven over 25,000 miles. All auto expenses, including gas, are paid by the employee.

Each employee must have his own auto insurance with $100,000/$300,000 minimum liability limits, a "commercial use" endorsement, and our company named as an "additional insured." The employer must have a "non-auto policy," which costs about $20, to cover liability and property damage during working hours for the total number of vehicles involved.

To get paid for a day's work, an employee must have a working vehicle. It's now up to each employee to borrow a car if his doesn't work.

ADVANTAGES

The arrangement allows employees to:

* own a vehicle of their choice.
* have the vehicle for personal use, which eliminates the cost of owning another car.
* take tax write-offs for auto expenses and depreciation allowances.
* avoid constantly switching from one company car to another, which requires moving parts and tools.
* benefit from lower insurance rates if they're good drivers.
* finance a vehicle formerly owned by the company for one to three years at 10-percent interest with no money down.
* develop self-responsibility by owning a vehicle used for business.

The arrangement allows the company to:

* avoid having to buy and sell cars.
* eliminate car-insurance headaches (exposure is limited) and paper work (IRS-required maintenance and mileage logs now kept by employees).
* eliminate $500 deductibles for collision accidents.
* avoid handling parking tickets, which now go directly to employees' homes.
* improve the balance sheet because company vehicles are sold and listed as receivables instead of depreciable assets.
* reduce work time lost because of vehicle breakdowns (employees take much better care of the vehicles when they own them).
* eliminate time spent on maintenance, which now is done on employees' own time.
* improve morale (you should see some of the options in these cars).

DISADVANTAGES

With any major change naturally comes the unforeseen. We were lucky that some employees chose to buy vans and trucks so they could rotate games on their routes more efficiently. Overall, because most employees chose to buy cars, there have been more requests for deliveries and pickups of games.

There is tremendous wear and tear on the vehicles, and in some instances the cars have been burglarized or damaged while parked during working hours. Some employees warrant more than $16 a day and some less. A few employees are driving high-performance cars, which get them to and from their stops quickly, but also could contribute to a serious accident. All this will have to be addressed at the end of one year.

FRANK'S THANKS

I want to thank operators for rating the "Frank's Cranks" column so highly in *Play Meter*'s recent survey. Your feedback is what motivates me to write these columns month after month.

Responses to the survey indicate that management, equipment buying, and service tips interest operators most. In this regard, my service department has been listing more service tips, which I will be adding to this column. The service department has recently built some very inexpensive "test fixtures" out of spare parts. I will tell you how to build the test fixtures, which can save you time and money in repairing boards, monitors, and power supplies.

I also am doing a comprehensive study of the negative impact the media has on our industry. If any of you have in your files any articles by well-known newspapers or magazines decreeing the decline and doom of the coin-op industry, please send me a copy.

I can be reached at Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales, 6 Sutton Place, Edison, NJ 08837, (201) 287-4990. As always, keep cranking.

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SHARPE SHOOTING

THE COIN-OP CHICAGOFEST

BY ROGER C. SHARPE

The 37th AMOA extravaganza is history, and all that remains is to take stock of what Expo '86 represented for the coin-op industry. By now, even the backwater towns have heard about the "hits" of the show, but were there any trends that we can pinpoint that might give us a better idea of what to expect in 1987? After all, this annual affair has always stood as a preview, as well as a review, of what the manufacturers have up their sleeves.

Walking the convention floor in the depths of the Hyatt Regency, it is easy to forget that there is an outside world. There you are in the middle of kiddie rides, video games, pinball machines, jukeboxes, novelty equipment, shuffle alleys, pool tables, and the rest of the coin-op finery, not to mention the noise and flash of the goings-on. There are no windows on the two lower floors where the show was staged, so day can just as easily be night. In fact, the world could be ending outdoors (forget about the traffic of Chicago) and there you stand, a captive audience looking at fun and games.

The AMOA show is an experience that can't be duplicated by even the best trade show on the state level. There is something unique about the "big event." Not only do the manufacturers pull out all stops for this time of year, so do all the industry members who attend.

All of us have expectations of what we'll be seeing, and the juicy rumors that fly around can brighten the gloomiest of times. This year, despite the general upswing in coin-op fortunes, there was news being made behind the scenes that was just as interesting as the equipment on display.

One of the big pieces of news on the show floor was that Data East believes enough in the pinball revival to help substantially fund an undertaking by Gary Stern, who most recently bought out a redo of Harry Williams' *Flight 2000* called *Gamatron* The pinball kit generated a great deal of interest a few months ago. Now it appears that Data East is ready to put money behind a new entrant in the growing pinball wars. It should be interesting to see what develops from this tandem and the caliber of products they'll undoubtedly be introducing before we're too far along in 1987.

But what about all the equipment exhibited, and which offerings might make a difference in the months ahead?

SIMULATORS A HOT TOPIC

Simulators, which I call sophisticated kiddie rides, were the hot topic of conversation on the floor and were led by Sega's *Out Run.* This driving game appears to have it all, with realistic effects and a challenging race course. But there was an issue that came up in talking with visitors on the show floor. The conversation had to do with the prices of this game and other machines. If nothing else at Expo '86, the concern expressed almost everywhere was the higher price of equipment.

And when you're considering an *Out Run* in the Deluxe cabinet, the price might be a bit steep, even forgetting about the space you'll need to fit it into a regular location. The same can be said for Konami's equally impressive effort, *WEC LeMans 24*, which is a far cry from the company's most recent GT creation.

We're talking about some heavy duty cabinetry and game play that might well challenge a *Pole Position II*, but these are high-ticket items and definitely not for every operator. Nevertheless, the days of Sente's *Strike Avenger* and the other cockpit sit-downs of yesteryear are over for now and, instead, we have a move to more elaborate packaging of a coin-op staple. And obviously we're going to see more because *Hang-On* and *Enduro Racer* proved so successful. If anyone has an old *Star Rider* lying around, there's no telling how it might do with today's audience.

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realistic, interactive entertainment continued as the prevalent trend with Nintendo's *VS. Slalom*, which incorporates a ski platform and dual pole controls. For those who thought this unique and innovative, it was. But so was a very similar effort by Allied Leisure unveiled at the 1975 MOA (as it was called in those days). This time around, however, there is a much greater chance for success given the Nintendo's track record and name recognition in the marketplace.

Taito introduced a lavish two-player sit-down called *Darius*. The horizontal-scrolling screen action wasn't overwhelming, but the concept of the cabinet design and what this triple-monitor set-up might mean for the future were intriguing to say the least. Once again, however, we're talking about a pricey item that is too large for many locations. Still, the thinking is there, and I'm sure by Expo '87 we'll be seeing some other variations on this multi-player theme.

MULTI-PLAYER TRENDS

Speaking of multi-player games, in them the coin-op industry apparently has found what it thinks is a way to bring video games back into prominence. The trend here is to get two, three, or four players on a single machine and hope that the coins will come pouring in the way they did with *Gauntlet*, *Rampage*, and *Quartet*.

There were many offerings in this category, including Taito's *Kick and Run*, in which soccer is presented for up to two-player, head-to-head team play reminiscent of *Foosball*. There are joysticks, buttons, and even foot pedals to get players totally involved in this fairly good simulation of the world's most popular sport.

The multi-player approach was equally evident elsewhere as we saw some manufacturers borrowing from successful themes and others trying original ideas. Tradewest displayed its surprise hit *Ikari Warriors*, which came out of nowhere several months ago and now is available as a kit. For those who don't have this game, or haven't seen it yet, it's a Rambo-like combat with strategy and non-stop action for two players.

The same might be said for an industry classic, *Joust*, which reappeared at Williams' booth as *Joust 2, Survival of the Fittest*. What attracts notice is not that this rendition is so remarkable, but rather that Williams has decided to return to the video wars after having had so much success, then backing off to let pinball take over. With the introduction of *Joust 2*, can there be any doubt that this Chicago-based giant is ready to flap its wings in more directions come next year?

Also bringing back a previous theme, but in a much better package, was Konami with its introduction of *Double Dribble*. This two-player basketball game has all the bells and whistles, including an isolated zoom-action visual of outrageous stuff shots, and it might well get some play during the NBA season. For those who fancy seasonal motifs, Bally Sente had a dual-trackball, two-player set-up with its *Street Football*. The game might bring back memories for those of us who grew up in the inner city, although you needn't have dodged cars and manholes to enjoy the action of this pigskin wonder.

There was still more multi-player excitement, such as Bally Midway's *Power Drive*. I like this "up to three-player, head-to-head" game that is *Track & Field* reincarnated. This time around there are oversized action buttons (remember *Granny and the Gators*?), a regulation button control for "wheelies," and a joystick for two- or four-wheel drive. The action on screen is pure ESPN delight as big-wheeled vehicles (Bigfoot and Stomper for the uninitiated) compete in a host of races to determine the grand champions. There are buy-ins literally (for players wanting to continue) and figuratively (on-screen to enter each competition), and heart-thumping pounding that should heat up the coldest locations come winter.

Less frantic was Cinematronics showing that it, too, could do a *Sprint* knockoff, and so it was with *Redline Racer* in a four-player cabinet and a two-player upright. There were some nice touches in what was presented, but I question whether there's room for something so similar, especially while Atari is still trying to pump out its versions. But the price point might make a difference in deciding, since there isn't much lost with the Cinematronics offering.

VIDEO POTPOURRI

In the realm of potpourri notables, video games that had some unique aspects, there were a number that stood out from the crowd and might make an impact before too long. Heading this grouping was Bally Sente's *Night Stocker*, a driving and shooting combo that might prove you can team up two different themes and pull off a miracle. This isn't to suggest that the concept hasn't been tried before (remember *Spy Hunter*), but this time around players have a steering wheel and a separate gun (a la the VS. System's configuration) for those who can pat their heads and rub their stomachs at the same time.

A new company on the scene, Millennium Game Products of California, was squirreled away on the side of the show floor, but didn't miss too much activity with its *Freedom Fighter*. Yes, this was a laser disc-based game, but before you shrug and try to forget the failed efforts of the past, give this company its due for a machine that is based on an award-winning interactive animated movie. The problems of disc games are still there in terms of learning curves and responsiveness to player movement as well as "controlling" the action, but there is an "overscan technology" that the company bills as being something unique in which the player can "look around within a scene before making a decision of which direction to go."

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This technology is far from dead in the coin-op world, although there still needs to be development and refinement of the art to more closely approximate the "video game" experience. RDI Video Systems tried, unsuccessfully, to recapture the magic with *Thayer's Quest*, which was a step in the right direction. But maybe the industry and the playing public aren't ready to accept this technology until all the wounds are healed. Anyway, laser discs will be a factor in the future, and it's nice to see someone keeping the spirit alive.

Also reminiscent of days gone by was the prototype *Lock-On* from Data East. In both a sit-down and upright, the action was pure *Firefox* with some interesting touches since this wasn't a disc, but rather a high-resolution video in this flight-simulation combat game.

Another move away from the conventional approach to fly-and-shoot models was *Danger Zone* from Cinematronics. This non-stop-action upright was novel for its use of a swivel monitor and control panel, but there needs to be more on-screen action. There also arose the question of placing this machine on location. First, you can't just bank it against the wall and next to other machines. The monitor sticks out in the back, and you need elbow room so the players can work the game. Second is concern about the durability of such a design and whether it could withstand play in inner-city locations where combatants weighing more than 200 pounds come in and try to muscle their way with the machines. Nevertheless, Cinematronics has a concept here that everyone should keep an eye on.

Cinematronics also showed a new countertop game cabinet for *World Series* and *Alley Master*. This might find its way into the taverns whose floorspace is at a premium. The strength of Cinematronics' product might well make the difference and propel this system into areas previously left to small trivia games and poker machines.

From the notion of "give me something original" came Atari's latest creation, which, admittedly, borrows heavily from *Paper Boy* and *Marble Madness*. The video game *720 Degrees* is a skateboarder's dream, and Atari's booth was filled with strange-looking California types in a ramped cage doing their best Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey routines on skateboards. Whether this youthful fad can move into the Midwest and East Coast, let alone the South, where youngsters might be better served by BMX bicycles for getting around, is anyone's guess, but I give Atari credit for this visually pleasing and extremely challenging game that might find a moderately large and receptive audience.

Speaking of trying to reach the masses, Tecmo (the old Tehkan for those who have been in hibernation) resurrected its football/soccer trackball console for an experimental version of *Teed Off*. Even though the game's name was misspelled and it was, obviously, a prototype, Tecmo was hoping to gain some interest in a sports simulation that brought together elements of *Birdie King* and *Big Event Golf*. Unfortunately, the play time between turns was too long (a player has to play the entire hole before his opponent gets his shot), as was the between-hole break. But some of the visuals were excellent, and, except for putting accuracy, the trackball worked well.

As for the other video games on display, the prevailing theme seemed to be "how can we knock off the action of *Vulgus*/*Xevious* and other similar action games of the past?" And the manufacturers did, in fact, find some solutions to the dilemma of standing in place. If the playing public didn't already have enough to choose from, they might get the opportunity to sample the likes of *UFO Robo Dangar* from Nichibutsu, Taito's *Alcon*, or *Legendary Wings* from *Capcom* that at least combined some horizontal-screen action to the vertical scrolling.

Last Mission from Data East interested me because I always liked *Time Pilot*, and this effort is remarkably similar in appearance and game play. The same might be said for Capcom's *SideArms*, which did move horizontally and served up some eye-catching visuals. Even Konami's *Life Force* was a vast improvement on *Nemesis* in terms of effects and game play. But there is that feeling of *deja vu* that can't be ignored as manufacturers look to staples and attempt to make modifications and new inroads.

Even Data East's innovative *Firetrap* bore a semblance of familiarity to the old *Crazy Climber*. But still and all, the industry moves ahead. Even Status, which has made its mark with trivia games, offered efforts such as *Clash Road*, a bicycle-race game, a golf game, and a space-themed game as an attempt to broaden the company's product line.

But a visitor didn't have to walk the floor for more than a day to realize that video wasn't in the catbird's seat this year. Instead, behind and around every corner were cranes of all kinds and sizes and enough plush-toy/jewelry/knick-knack sources to choke a horse. Redemptions are in, don't make any mistake about it. Play for prizes is the buzzword for this era of coin-op, and one can only watch and wait until the next big outrage will be against "this crane-game contraption that's taking all the kids' money." Move over pinball, video, card games, and all the rest; I guarantee that 1987 will be the legal test-case year for cranes.

PINBALL HIGHLIGHTS

The real highlight of Expo '86, forgetting about cranes, multiple-player machines, and simulation equipment, were the pinballs on display. Even though the pure number of models wasn't overwhelming (four from the majors and two from Europe), the quality and ingenuity of the games were

promising enough to ensure that flipper games are a major continuing influence in the coin-op scheme of things.

Bally has had a tough time getting up to speed (no pun intended) with ramps that covered critical playfield areas and games such as *Motordrome* and *Special Force* that seemingly came and went. But this time around *Strange Science* offered everything and the kitchen sink, with five-ball multi-ball play and effects out the kazoo. There was quite a bit of attention paid this piece, and the only real questions raised were about the mechanical reliability of the balls loaded at the bottom of the playfield and whether the flippers could provide enough power to get to the key areas on the board. If these problems can be solved to the extent that *Strange Science* can withstand day-in-day-out play, Bally may well find itself with a real winner.

At Premier the mood also was upbeat as the company displayed its "Gottlieb line" of product including *Genesis*, which is a solid, playable machine, and the feature-filled *Gold Wings*, which improves much over its *Hollywood Heat* inspiration. Finally, the company that has probably done the most to re-establish the power of pinball, Williams, was back with *Pin Bot*, a game with some new twists and turns that should drive it to the top.

All in all, the AMOA didn't disappoint those who came, saw, and savored the best of the industry's creative minds. The mood was optimistic for the cynical and supportive visitor alike, leaving the verdict in the hands of the players, the ultimate judges of what will be a hit or a miss.

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CRITIC'S CORNER

LOST IN THE AMOA SHUFFLE

BY ROGER C. SHARPE

It's interesting every year to see the equipment introduced at the AMOA show, but just as fascinating are those models that don't make the convention floor for one reason or another. There even are machines that you think might be main attractions, but sometimes manufacturers have different ideas and highlight something else.

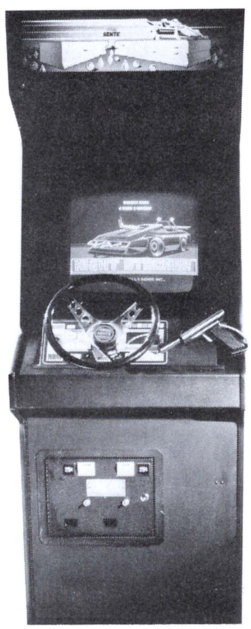
Looking at pinballs, for example, Bally's *Special Force* didn't look too bad when I first saw it a couple of months ago, but at the show *Strange Science* was the focal point at Bally's booth. At Williams' booth, *Road Kings* moved over and left a clear path for *Pin Bot*. Premier did display *Genesis*, but it was easy to overlook with all the attention heaped on *Gold Wings*.

All over the show floor were other machines either conspicuous by their absence or taking a back seat to some other newcomer that enjoyed the spotlight. You can tell just how a manufacturer feels about a particular machine by the time, energy, and attention it devotes to it for the three days of the show.

Though there may be blockbusters coming, some of the games that have been out for two or three months and are still available new from distributors have the potential to be winners on location if you're an operator who has been wavering on a purchase. With this in mind, and as a way to get "Critic's Corner" caught up, here are some reviews of some new "oldies."

Bally Sente's *Night Stocker*

Although attention may have been split with the appearance of *Street Football*, it was obvious at the show, as well as from the advance publicity, that Sente's *Night Stocker* is something special, a machine that many are counting on to pull big numbers.



Night Stocker

It is true that driving games are a staple and that shooting games have always been solid performers, so, conceptually at least, the premise of combining both elements into one package seems to make sense. Graphically, *Night Stocker* is a solid-looking piece with great effects and on-screen detailing that should please passers-by as well as players.

This game's first-person perspective is much more effective than the third-person perspective of a game like *Spy Hunter*, and the action elements tie everything together neatly and completely. The action is basic dodge and shoot, as players must maneuver their vehicle to pick up (pass over) power crystals on the landscape. Meantime, enemies approaching from the air must be destroyed by firing a sleekly styled gun.

For me the experience is like trying to rub my head and pat my stomach at the same time, for others it might be as simple as chewing gum and walking at the same time. Anyway, there are 16 waves, or phases, to the game, and appearances of enemy fortresses break up each interval. This part of the game is intriguing because it's very much like a shooting game: foes who randomly appear in the windows must be shot before they fire back and destroy the vehicle.

Instead of having players fire away haphazardly, there are a limited number of shots available during a given wave. So precision shooting and split-second maneuvering make *Night Stocker* a compelling and challenging game. On the surface, it looks easy enough to beat, but in practice it's going to be difficult to master.

With *Night Stocker*, Bally Sente should find itself with a steady performer that has the potential to draw over the long term. We'll go with a ### 3/4 and give the folks in design and engineering a great deal of credit for putting together a very impressive package.

Premier's *Genesis* Gottlieb pinball

Bill Pollock and the rest of Premier's troops have done a hell of a job in the past couple of years. And as evidenced by the Gottlieb name on all their creations, they haven't forgotten their heritage. This isn't to suggest that the road back has been an easy one. It hasn't. But through trial and error, as well as better implementation of technology, the company's pinball machines have come a very long way.

Genesis

Although Premier's main focus at the AMOA show may have been on *Gold Wings*, *Genesis* stands as a classical design with basic shot and scoring sequences for the average player as well as the novice.

The layout of *Genesis* is symmetrical and straightforward. There are three lanes on top (A-B-C) that are tied into the completion of the word B-O-D-Y. Move down a bit and there's a four-thumper bumper area that provides some very good rebounding action. Over to the left is a vari-target with incremental point values of 10,000 on up to 40,000. At mid-field there's a three-bank of drop targets (1-2-3) that will spot a letter from the display at the top of the board.

Next are the main visual attractions of *Genesis*: two pink ramps at either side of the board. The one on the left helps to spell out A-R-M-S while the one on the right lights L-E-G-S. Also at the sides are a long return lane on the left (which helps spot a B-R-A-I-N letter when lit) and a shorter lane area on the right for the same purpose. Lower down on the board are two stand-up targets at the extreme sides that feature kicker switches behind for much more rapid action. Finishing off *Genesis* is a conventional lane and flipper bottom.

The play is basic. Finish off the four words and complete the body parts. There's scoring potential galore as the Premier folks truly have taken advantage of their eight-digit scoring capability. Multiplier scoring for playfield values alone can increase to an unbelievable maximum of 49X for single-ball play. And if that potential weren't enough, multi-ball play scoring can reach a staggering 98X if a player can continue to make ramp shots and spell out body parts. The bonus to the entire exercise is the potential of activating the "lifeforce generator," which means that the vari-target has to be hammered back. Once this is accomplished, *Genesis* offers an interesting effect underneath the board at mid-field. There's a little light-and-sound show and the revelation of a Fritz Lang *Metropolis*-type robotic body in shimmering metallic material. It's a nice touch, but the end-all and do-all of the game are the accessibility of all its features from either flipper and the smoothness of play with its strategies and sequencing.

Premier continues to champion the move away from conventional silk screening for backglass graphics to the use of a new photographic technique that offers true-to-life visuals and settings such as this mad-scientist creation. Overall, the playfield graphics are bright, and the use of pastels cuts down substantially on the glare that normally occurs at most locations. And the pink ramps are eye-catching to say the least: You notice them, pure and simple.

Genesis is a classic build-up game in that what a player does on one turn has an effect on the turns that follow. Because of this, setting limits can be crucial for prolonging play or rewarding exceptional play. This is especially true since we're talking about a machine that can get into the tens of millions of points. For extra-ball play on three-ball settings, depending upon your particular percentaging and the audience's skill, you might want to try 800,000 points to start and 1.8 million points for a second level. On free play the increase of 200,000 to 400,000 points to each limit should be all right as an incentive that's attainable.

It's easy to overlook *Genesis*, especially with *Gold Wings* appearing on the scene so quickly, but here is a machine that offers solid, stable play and an earning cycle that is going to be constant over time. We're not talking about a game with the inherent panache to draw in big bucks and then tail off, as is fairly standard in this business, but rather a throwback to the days of Gottlieb pins, when you knew about what the cashbox would offer from collection to collection. The novelty of this game design is that it's all there for skilled and unskilled players, and the kinetics of the field make play extremely enjoyable.

Looking at the components, the vari-target remains a solid ingredient for today's audience. Hitting something and watching it react dependent upon the force applied is very satisfying. The ramps are right in front of the player, and they don't block the view of any critical area on the board. They're just there to be hit, and the little swirl at the end of the ball's flight before it drops down is great to watch on the continuation of a shot. Add in a nice long lane up the left side for a rest period and access back to the top and *Genesis* provides some strong balance, top to bottom, side to side.

Even the bottom is kept alive with the inclusion of Premier's target/kicker combo that can rapidly propel a ball across and over the field. I like the nuances of the game and the sequencing of shots and scoring, which allows for big paybacks when someone is on a roll. And I think that players will go back to this basic scheme of things once they've sampled the other contenders in the pinball sweepstakes.

Obviously I think very highly of the playability of *Genesis* and its long-term appeal. Premier might not have all the flash and effects with this package, but there is enough built-in entertainment value to please almost any player. I'll go with a ### 3/4 for the potential staying power of *Genesis*. It is a machine that shouldn't be taken lightly by any operator who is looking to upgrade or expand his pinball line-up.

Sega's *Enduro Racer*

Here is a company with an incredible history in this business (remember Sega/Gremlin?) that suddenly has re-awakened with a vengeance. After having been consumed by Bally a couple of years ago, ostensibly to pool resources for advancing laser-disc technology, the Sega name kind of faded from view. But a year or so ago a new Sega re-emerged with some outstanding and inventive-looking product. And judging by the comments on the AMOA show floor, the company has struck it rich again with *Out Run*, its impressive racing simulation. Possibly lost in the shuffle, however, was a relatively new

Enduro Racer

game called *Enduro Racer*.

In a full-fledged arcade sit-down or upright model, the game offers some solid graphics and play action in which timing and expert control are critical elements. Now you've undoubtedly heard something about *Enduro Racer*, whether it's been the "pricey" cost to the operator or the question of whether, after *Hang-On*, there really is a need for another motorcycle game.

Well, this piece does have its own distinctive features: five stages of play. some simulated effects for jumping barriers and handling turns, and, at least with the full motorcycle sit-down, an attention-getting cabinet. All of these things are true with this game, and yet I wonder about the staying power of *Enduro Racer* and whether an arcade operator with a single location can make back his money quickly enough. For operators of multiple locations, the point is moot since the game can be rotated easily from one site to another, keeping it fresh and the earnings up.

As a novelty, *Enduro Racer* is a solid performer, and if you passed on *Hang-On*, here's a game with play appeal that goes one step further. But it's definitely not for everyone and every location. Whether it may someday attain classic status similar to a *Pole Position*, which lived on and on, is anyone's guess. My judgment is that Sega should be commended for producing a machine whose looks and play are excellent. We'll go with a solid ### 1/2 and the caveat that an operator better know his audience before he purchases this expensive game.

Atari Games' *Road Runner*

It was easy to get caught up in all the furor of *720 Degrees*, the Atari game that was introduced at the AMOA show and will be reviewed in an upcoming column, but there still is the system concept at the company. For those who have System I (*Marble Madness* and *Indiana Jones*), *Road Runner* may be what you've been looking for.

Road Runner

(My only question before I get to the matters at hand is about the skateboard experts that Atari brought into Chicago to promote *720 Degrees*. How can a teenager get his hair to hang down on only one side of his face . . . long, straggly, unkempt, blond-dyed hair that probably only a mother could love? It's one thing to see some rock-and-roll nightmare on MTV; it's quite another to see the style in person. Anyway, let's get back to Purolater Courier's newest spokesperson . . . beep beep.)

In a world of good guys and bad guys, chases, and impossible odds to succeed, it seems fitting somehow that the Warner Bros. cartoon classic should finally make it to the arcades.

Interestingly, one of the last pinball projects by the "old" Atari, after *Superman*, was to be a Road Runner pin game. But things never happened that way, and a decade later we find R.R. and Wile E. Coyote on the video screen doing what they do best: the improbable, the impossible, and the totally outrageous.

There are elements here of many other video games, but the blending in of theme and situation is enough to keep the experience fresh and inviting. Atari also has incorporated something they call "the hall-effect joystick" into the machine, which allows free movement in all directions and positions for speed and general maneuvering of the Road Runner. There's also a button for hopping when the player wants to get R.R. across a desert cavern or over obstacle on the highway.

I like the concept of *Road Runner*. After all, I grew up with the characters when Saturday morning meant Mighty Mouse, Captain Midnight, Heckle and Jeckle, and Bugs Bunny. But today it's a new generation, and Masters of the Universe, Transformers, and all the rest rule the roost, leaving me to wonder whether the recognition factor can help this game in locations with a younger audience.

My concern is heightened when I see an express-delivery service also call on the Road Runner as a way to convey its efficiency and service to an older, upscale audience. Can the Road Runner transcend both extremes and work? I don't know, but I feel that the theme is past its prime and the only draw will be the game play. The question is whether today's young audience is ready, willing, and able to enjoy this kind of dodge-and-effect action. I think they will because *Road Runner* is a bit different visually from all the other video packages on the market, such as the sports and driving motifs we've been seeing, not to mention the kung-fu and space themes.

Road Runner is a breath of fresh air, with a number of nuances and subtleties thrown in for good measure to make it a not-so-easy game to master. I'll go with a ### and see if the beep beep can earn over the long haul. Once again, know who your audience is and whether they will gravitate to the images on the screen. If not, *Road Runner* could be a lost cause looking for a player base.

Keep the faith

That's it for this installment of "Critic's Corner" and a look at some games that might have been lost in the shuffle at the AMOA show and otherwise cast aside for offerings that received the lion's share of the attention on the exhibit floor. Next time around, we'll begin evaluating machines that will be in the news in the months to come, including everything from video and pinball to, perhaps, darts and other novelty equipment.

In the meantime, enjoy the holidays and keep the faith for '87. By the look of things, equipment is only getting better and better, and the players are going to keep on supporting their love affair with coin-operated amusement-game entertainment. Just remember that it's important to recognize the needs and desires of your players and select the machines that best suit them.

As always, be well and prosper.

PLAYERS' PICKS

Expo '86 a step in the right direction

BY STEVE HARRIS AND THE U.S. NATIONAL VIDEO GAME TEAM

AMOA Expo '86 boasted a healthy attendance and an upbeat spirit that was difficult to ignore. The selection of new equipment destined for the winter marketplace was outstanding. Nearly every exhibitor offered superior product, which indicates that the industry has its finger on the pulse of players.

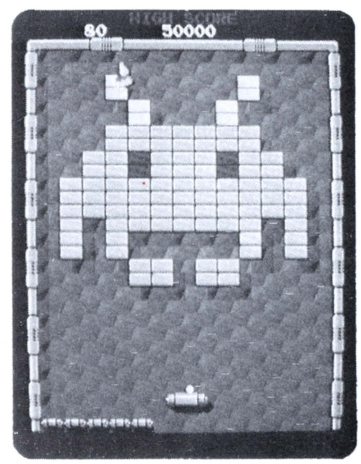
The show was an optimistic hint at what is to come in future months. But that little peek was enough to convince just about everyone who attended that the industry's future is bright. Good product at a good price is no longer rare, and trends such as the recent development of the crane market are pumping life into the industry. Operators who attended the show saw an abundance of equipment, which is a welcome gift to an industry that has patiently awaited a much-deserved turnaround.

Members of the U.S. National Video Game Team were on hand at Expo '86 to answer questions from operators (many of whom had trouble choosing the best of the new equipment because there was so much that was good) and test the manufacturers' latest offerings. What we saw will delight players in the coming months.

In conjunction with the Amusement Players Association (APA), the team presented a series of awards at the AMOA show. These "Players' Picks" selections, based on the opinions and preferences of team members, represent what we feel were the best games at the show.

Best conversion kit: Romstar's *Arkanoid*

Since its inception, Romstar has prided itself as one of the country's leading kit producers. The company's dedication to the industry has been reinforced with every new-game release, each better than the last. Offering solid conversions at reasonable prices has become a Romstar trademark, benefiting operators with quality games that rival most of the dedicated fare.



A scene from *Arkanoid*

While many companies are searching for elaborate new games to attract players, Romstar quietly has sprung one of the hottest games of the year. *Arkanoid* debuted a few months ago as an unassuming update of that old Atari favorite, *Breakout.* Although *Arkanoid* is depicted in an outer-space setting, the two games share the goal of knocking out blocks with a rebounding ball and a bat. But, as *Arkanoid* players soon discovered, there are few other similarities. *Arkanoid* expands upon the basic premise of *Breakout* by updating the game with additional play incentives. Beyond its brick-bashing theme, *Arkanoid* boasts multiple customizing features that are obtained by catching pellets hidden behind certain blocks. These capsules, identified by color, can expand the player's bat, slow the ball, award bonus men, and divide the ball into

three separate projectiles. These and other customizing capsules open up new strategies that affect play from round to round and make the game more fun to play. The multi-colored bricks of *Arkanoid* are stacked in different configurations to increase spectator interest and difficulty. The bricks themselves maintain individual personalities. While the majority of the blocks are destroyed when hit by the ball, others have to be struck twice, and some can't be eliminated at all. The result is that players must have the skill to make complicated ricochet shots in order to progress to higher waves.

The graphics and sound effects of *Arkanoid* are simple, but game play is extremely solid. *Arkanoid* is one of those few video games that appeal to older crowds and women and do not intimidate the casual player. *Arkanoid* has something for everyone.

The game is a shining example of how a simple, uncomplicated game with strong play action can attract a following. *Arkanoid* has all the features of today's best dedicated games for the price of a kit. You only have to do one thing if you want to attract people of all ages to your locations: convert your games (and not just your deadwood) to *Arkanoid.*

Best system conversion: Bally Sente's *Night Stocker*

Now that each of the major system producers (Atari, Nintendo, Cinematronics, etc.) has built up an impressive library of games, many are looking to design unique games that will sell more system units.

Although Nintendo got the jump on most, several companies have released some strong software to generate interest in their systems. Cinematronics wowed everyone with its definitive baseball simulation, *World Series, the Season.* Atari and Nintendo did likewise with *Indiana Jones* and *Super Mario Bros.* Now Bally Sente, the originator of the system-software

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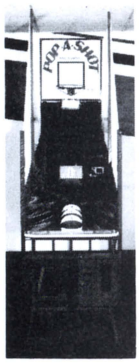

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Night Stocker

marketing philosophy, has scored with its own thrill-injected mega-hit, *Night Stocker.*

Night Stocker is set on an alien world inhabited by a menagerie of foes and guarded by an endless succession of robot fortresses. Taking control of a car (with a steering wheel) and a powerful gun (a separate light-gun assembly), players must navigate across the planet while scooping up crystals with a special claw mounted on the car's hood.

Night Stocker is an action game par excellence. It combines all of the fast-paced features of a driving contest with the proven playability of a gun game to provide video fun at its best.

Most innovative game: Cinematronics' *Danger Zone*

One of the most pleasing developments apparent at AMOA Expo '86 was a trend toward more interactive machines that afford greater realism for the player.

Although high prices have caused many ride-in simulators to fail (the Colorado Game Exchange's *Hot Seat* is an exception), ride-on games (such as Sega's *Hang-On* and *EnduroRacer*) have fared much better. With physical aspects incorporated into the games, players are treated to a much more involving experience.

The latest game to use an exterior peripheral as part of the game play debuted in the Cinematronics booth. Entitled *Danger Zone*, this war simulation uses a mock-up of an anti-aircraft cannon to simulate actions of an enemy attack.

The game itself is simple and straightforward, a basic first-person-perspective shoot-'em-up. As the player defends his beachfront, waves of enemy stealth fighters and bombers appear on the horizon. These aircraft zoom toward the player's position in tight formations, releasing their bombs if not destroyed. In subsequent waves more planes and helicopters appear to add to the challenge.

To repel this invasion, the player has several weapons at his disposal. A short-range scanner provides accurate locations of all enemy aircraft as they appear on the main screen. Mounted on both sides of the control panel are gun grips that can release a steady stream of bullets as well as some heat-seeking missiles that home-in on the bad guys.

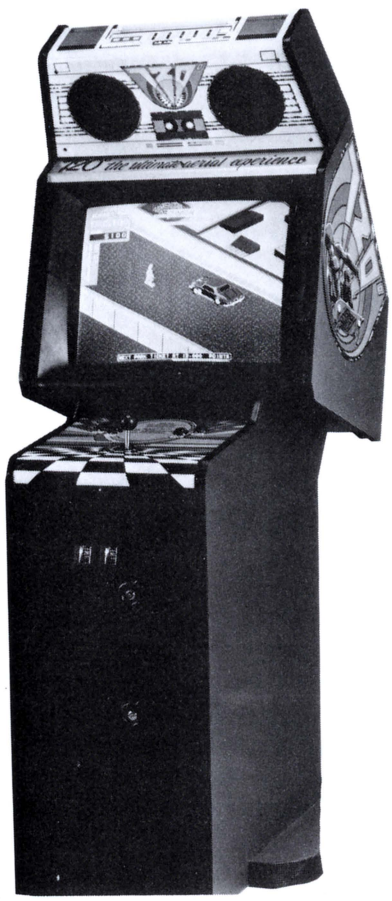
Danger Zone's best feature, however, is its interactive control system. By moving the monitor on its swiveling base, the player can survey the entire coastline and the airspace above it, just as if he were looking out of a window. The monitor assembly moves back and forth easily and really gets a player into the game. Unlike ride-on simulators that have a limited field of movement, *Danger Zone* offers players total freedom within the game's environment.

The Cinematronics spirit shines through once again in *Danger Zone.* The hardware mechanisms are truly inventive and, with promised

enhancements in the game itself, *Danger Zone* has the potential to become a classic. This is a great attraction that doesn't require a lot of space to locate.

Most challenging game & most original game idea: Atari's *720 Degrees*

Atari Games has been hot of late, producing a series of strong dedicated pieces as well as some good support for the company's two systems. The company didn't disappoint at the AMOA show. In addition to its System 1 and 2 conversions (*Road Runner* and *Championship Sprint*, respectively), Atari displayed *Gauntlet II* in both two- and four-player configurations. The majority of the floorspace at Atari's booth, however, was occupied by a small skateboard park being used by some very skilled skaters to promote *720 Degrees*.



720 Degrees

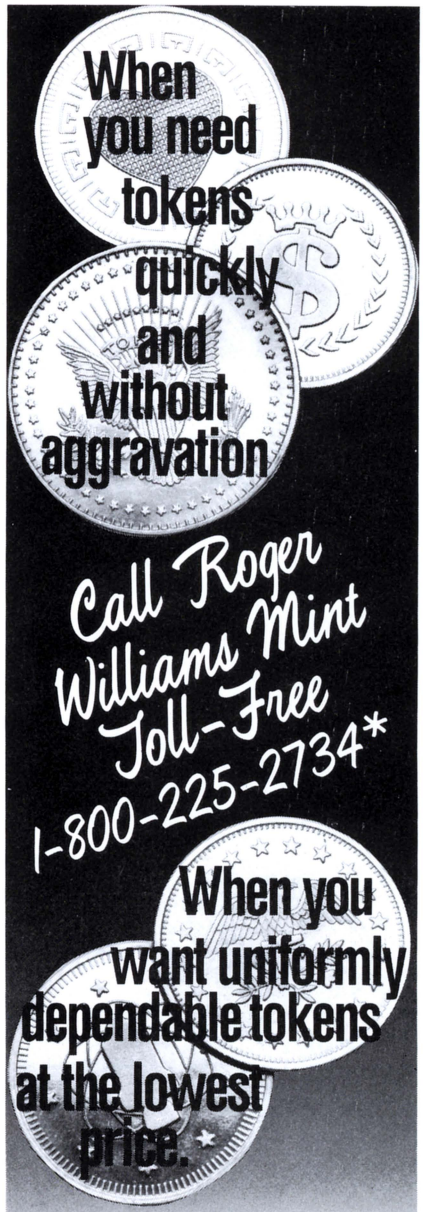
Everything about *720 Degrees* is original. Players must perform a variety of skating maneuvers within the game's enclosed environment. There are hills, jumps, and a variety of other hazards with which players must interact. By rotating a joystick and using a button for speed, players can score points and win cash awards that can be converted into extra gear that provides a number of benefits.

Occasionally the ominous threat, "Skate or Die," will flash across the screen. This cue prompts players to get to one of four different skate parks for bonus play. These parks extend the game's play value and really add to the fun.

720 Degrees's strongest selling point (both to operators and players) is its unique theme. Although its style is reminiscent of *Paperboy*'s, this game allows more freedom and maneuverability. Players can go anywhere in *720 Degrees* (there's even a map to show the entire park at a glance) and see a lot.

The animation in *720 Degrees* is top-notch. Everything is rendered in bright and colorful hues that accentuate the action. Atari programmers modeled the movements of the game's main characters on those of actual skateboard riders so that realism could be retained in the game's surreal world. The audio accompaniment is equally outstanding. It provides a great backdrop to the action and really supports the game play.

Even though it's a little abstract, *720 Degrees* has an original theme that is sure to entice spot interest, while its challenging game play and a number of other surprise features will ensure a loyal following among frequent customers. *720 Degrees* has all the profitable attributes that we've come to expect from Atari Games.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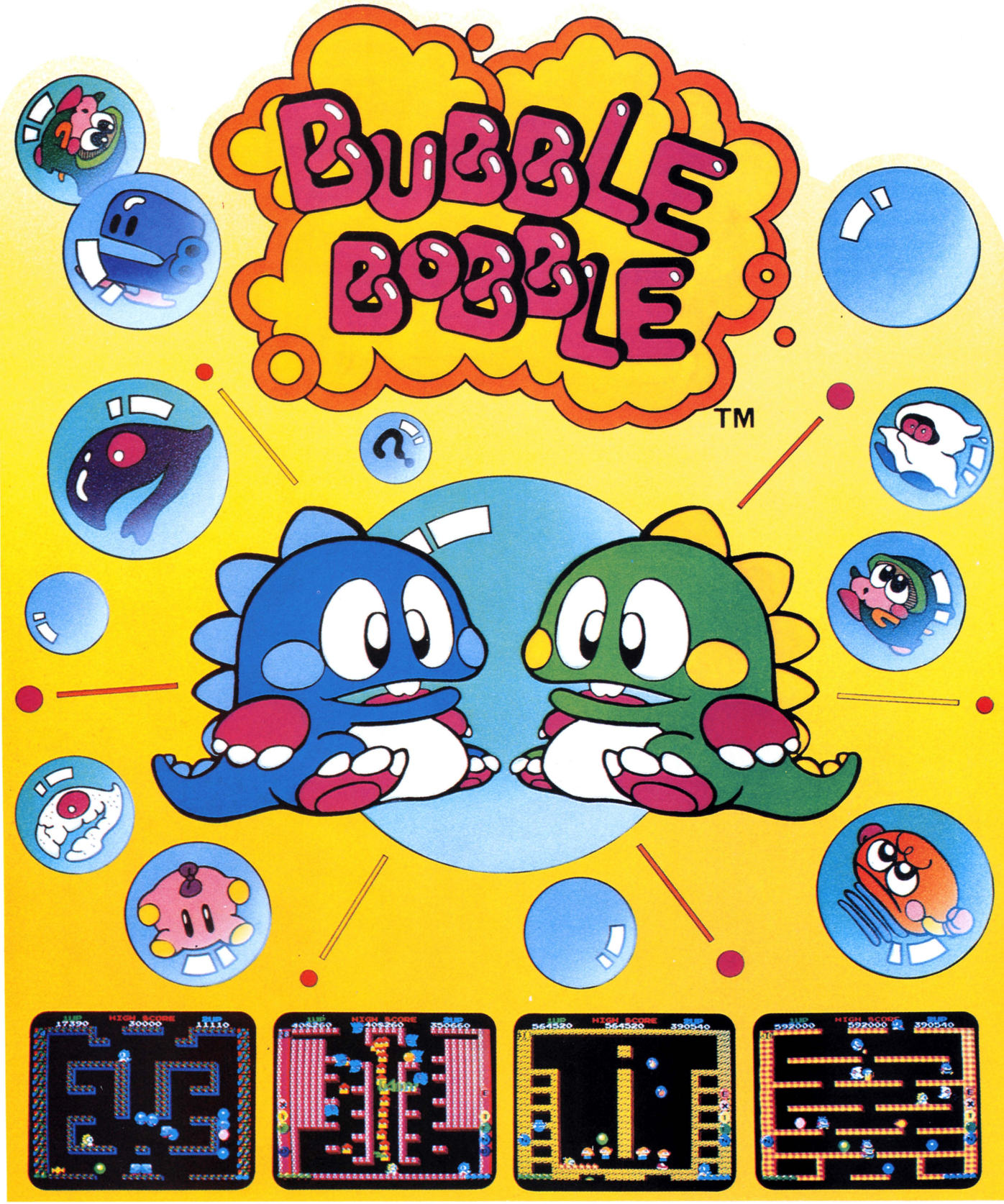

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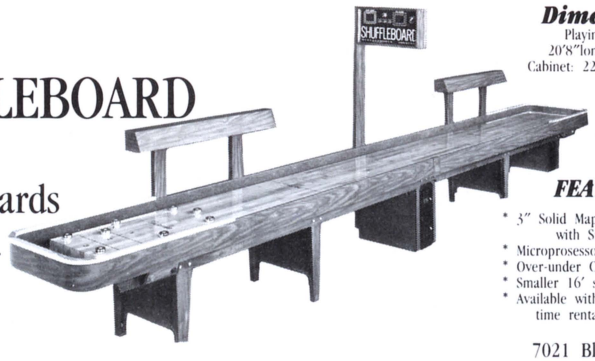

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Best pinball: Bally Midway's *Strange Science*

Something must be said about the extraordinary showing that pinball made at Expo '86. The major pin manufacturers had solid machines that had the Video Game Team leaving the videos in favor of some fast flipper action. The strong performance of the pins at the show coincided with Data East's announcement that it would be entering the market with a new division headed by pinball veteran Gary Stern. A resurgence in pinball popularity has occurred, and if future product is as good as we saw at the show, we may just change our name to the U.S. National Pinball Team.

Strange Science

Williams showed *Pin-Bot* to receptive crowds, and its robot-space theme and interesting layout made it one of our favorite games at the show. Premier displayed *Genesis* and a brand-new game entitled *Gold Wings*. Following the concept of the successful summer movie *Top Gun*, *Gold Wings* is filled with innovative playfield enhancements that keep

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players in the game. *Gold Wings* was a close second for our best-pinball award and should see plenty of favorable reaction from players in coming months.

The one pin game that stood above the rest, however, was Bally Midway's *Strange Science*, a mad-doctor/monkey transformation tale with unparalleled excitement. This machine incorporates proven elements as well as a number of original ideas all its own. The result is a super playfield packed with numerous skill shots and a few other nifty ideas that make this package unique.

The playfield follows the theme of the game with a variety of ramps, "anti-gravity" tubes, and an "atom smasher" that can store balls for some thrilling multi-ball play. A host of other surprises and scoring incentives round out the game play, including "S-T-R-A-N-G-E-S-C-I-E-N-C-E" banks, special loops, and a new "rebound" button that can kick a drained ball back into play with a well-timed hit.

Strange Science's bright and flashy backglass art reinforces the game's comic theme. A mad doctor, his gorilla counterpart, and a shapely victim add humor and visual appeal to the game with their wild expressions. A bolt of electricity caps off this fantasy nightmare, exploding with a bright flash whenever certain shots are performed.

Strange Science is a beautiful example of current pinball design. Although all of the pinball machines at the AMOA show were of exceptional quality, *Strange Science* overshadowed the competition with its numerous innovations and humorous overtones. It is without a doubt the best Bally pin to appear in a long time. It's a blockbuster.

Best visual appeal, best audio enhancement, & best game of the show: Sega's *Out Run*

How do you outdo the best driving game of all time? You release *Hang-On*. And how do you do *Hang-On* one better? You offer up *Enduro Racer*. Intent on improving its games even further, Sega now has debuted *Out Run*, a clever combination of ideas that puts all the other driving games to shame.

Out Run is unquestionably the most incredible driving game ever produced. Shown in both "stimulator" and upright formats, *Out Run* knocked everyone to the floor with its realistic visual appearance, outstanding sound effects, and solid play action.

The exceptional clarity of the graphics is incomparable with anything

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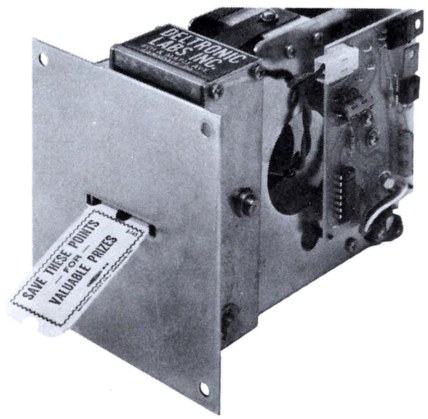

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that's ever been seen in a video game. The visual quality is superb, with crisp detail and fluid animation throughout. More than a dozen different scenes await players, and each is beautifully drawn in colorful hues and realistic shading. The game also does an excellent job of creating perspective with highways that stretch off into the horizon. And you better hope you don't crash, because you'll wince with pain if you do; it's that real.

The musical accompaniment also is above average, offering players their choice of three distinct rock

Out Run

soundtracks on an FM car radio. All the tunes are fast-paced and suit game play very well.

The Sega designers have done a good job of making *Out Run* play like no other driving game. It features dozens of real-life conditions that have been absent in previous racing games. Players encounter hills, hairpin turns, tunnels, and sand-swept desert highways as they race toward the finish line.

Any one of a number of *Out Run* features would be good enough to carry a game by itself. But all these attributes have been wrapped together in one machine that absolutely blows everything else away.

No praise is too high for Sega or this ace of a game. It incorporates all of the most popular features of previous car races with technologically advanced programming and engineering to produce what could be a virtually perfect video game. Congratulations to Sega and the operators who buy *Out Run*.

Honorable mentions

Data East's *Last Mission*: What sets this space shoot-'em-up apart from the rest is its fast action and clear graphics. Similar to *Time Pilot '84*, *Last Mission* offers a number of weapons that really give players a feeling of power. This is definitely worth a look-see.

Bally Sente's *Street Football*: With the introduction of its latest SAC-Pak, Bally Sente has brought the game of football down to street level. *Street Football* is a humorous adaptation of the sport, with all the options up to the player. A trackball controls most of the action of the three-man teams as they avoid each other as well as street hazards like cars, open manholes, and dogs.

Bally Midway's *Power Drive*: This game is a terrific throwback to Konami's super-hit *Track & Field*. Players have to rhythmically slap buttons to pick up speed in their car-crunching trucks before going over piles of cars to reach the finish line. This three-player game was getting some heavy play at the show. The physical aspects of play should be welcome by players who like intense competition. Keep an eye on this one; it just may follow *Gauntlet* and *Rampage* into the land of mega-money-makers.

Other manufacturers showed potential hits in their suites during the show, and, from what I saw, the next few months are going to be as rich in good product as the past few months have been.

In next month's "Players' Picks" look for more in-depth game reviews and endorsements as well as a new feature that will benefit coin-op game operators everywhere. Until then, let me say congratulations to everyone involved in AMOA Expo '86; your spirit really did shine through.

Tax Tips

BY JEFFREY ROSENTHAL, E.A.

New tax law: Simplification or reform?

In his 1986 State of the Union address, President Reagan announced an all-out drive to radically simplify the tax code.

By the time the address was made, the Treasury Department already had made a tax-simplification proposal called Treasury I. The department revised the plan after the public and the lobbyists had a chance to comment. The new plan was called, cleverly, Treasury II. After that, tax-reform bills were introduced in both houses of Congress and began a drawn-out legislative process that has resulted in new tax law.

After having reviewed more than 900 pages of the new law, I can only conclude: reform, yes; simplification, no way.

You may be shocked to learn that on October 22, when President Reagan signed the tax-reform bill into law, more than 100 errors in the law had been documented. Normally, before a bill goes to the president for his signature, both houses of Congress pass an enrollment resolution authorizing the clerk of the House to make sure that the wording and language are proper.

In this case, that gave congressmen yet another opportunity to propose amendments. The House passed the necessary enrollment resolution, and so did the the Senate, but the Senate also attached several amendments unacceptable to the House. On October 18, the Congress was adjourned with no resolution agreed upon. That's why the bill went to President Reagan complete with errors.

Now it will be up to the 100th Congress to pass the "Technical Corrections Act of 1987." In other words, the Congress will write the first of many amendments to follow passage of the Tax Reform Act of '86.

The question of whether the new law is better than the old may be arguable, but it is not really relevant. How the various states with income taxes will change their laws in the wake of a new federal law is another question awaiting an answer, and it will be discussed in upcoming "Tax Tips" columns.

Special notes

The Tax Reform Act of '86 (TRA'86) now requires all entities other than estates to adopt a calendar tax year during 1987 unless they can furnish a valid business reason, one acceptable to the IRS, that they should not. The logistics of this are simple, but final regulations have not been released as yet. For the fiscal year 1986, you would file the regularly scheduled return. Then you would file a second return, said to be a short-year return, for the rest of 1987 through December 31, 1987.

Under the TRA'86 it will be significantly more advantageous for corporate businesses that sell assets to be small corporations or Sub Chapter S corporations. There are certain conditions that must be met to qualify as Sub Chapter S (section 1372 election), but it is equally important for this application to be effective before January 1, 1987. Theoretically, this is only possible for corporations on a fiscal year, because there is a 75-day period at the beginning of the tax year to make this election. If you are on a calendar year, it is impossible to do this effective before January 1, 1987.

The significance of the Sub Chapter S election will be felt on the taxing of the sale of assets. Individuals, partnerships, trusts, estates, and S-corporations will be taxed only once on the sale. C-corporations may be taxed twice, and their shareholders another time. This makes a sale of C-corporation assets taxed three times [TRA'86 Section 806(b)]. Sell in '86 if you can.

Investment tax credits for newly acquired assets have been repealed retroactively to January 1, 1986. There is one transition rule of special note: If you contracted to purchase a business asset (a car, for example) during 1985 but did not take delivery until 1986, the investment tax credit

still is available. Also, any carryover credits still are valid. Many transition rules apply here.

Prediction: The investment tax credit definitely will be back.

Changes in taxation of investment and rental income defy brief description and will be fully explained in a future "Tax Tips" column.

Unemployment income is now fully taxable (I predicted this seven years ago). Social Security Income law is the same as 1986, but watch this one in years to come.

IRA changes

The whole IRA (individual retirement account) issue is a disturbing farce. The IRA was first instituted to take pressure off the Social Security System. The IRA law then was liberalized, again to take pressure off Social Security and also to encourage savings so that more money would go into banking institutions, which in turn would have more money to lend for housing, etc. I thought those goals were important. Can any politician explain why they are not important now? After all, has anything really changed? Is the Social Security System any better off today?

When the public really discovers the new law, most will think it is worse than the media has discussed. First of all, it should be stated clearly that no matter what, *you will still be able to make IRA deposits as before and have the interest grow tax-deferred.* So what has changed? Deductibility of your deposit, of course.

The press has reported that if you are covered by a pension, Keogh plan, or 401K you will not be allowed to deduct your IRA deposit for 1987 and years beyond if you continue to have pension coverage in future years. But no press report that I've read told the whole story. In the case of a married couple with both working, if one has a pension and the other doesn't, you would think that the spouse without the pension coverage would be eligible to deduct his IRA deposit. You would be wrong.

Assuming no pension coverage, and also assuming your adjusted income is below the following amounts, your deduction is safe: married, filing jointly: $40,000; married, filing separately: zero; others: 25,000.

In addition, if your adjusted gross income is up to $10,000 more than the above limits, your deduction will be reduced proportionately from $2,000 to zero.

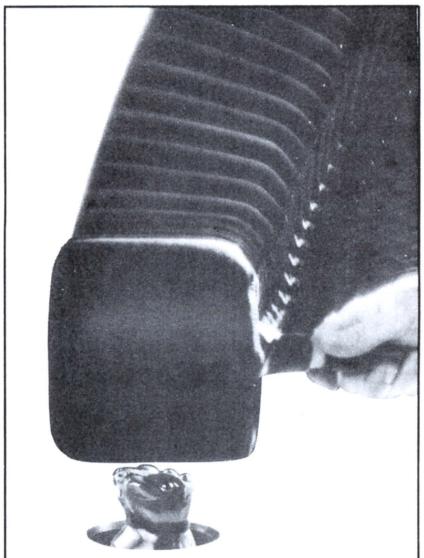
The TRA'86 also forbids you from commingling deductible and non-deductible IRA funds [TRA'86 Sections 110(a)-110(c), 1144(a)-1144(b)].

Kiddie taxes

Regarding a child's unearned income from any source, such as interest, dividends, etc., for tax years beginning on January 1, 1987, TRA'86 distinguishes between children younger than 14 and children 14 and older.

Children 14 or older are taxed at regular tax rates, not their parents' rates. But the unearned income of a child younger than 14 is taxed to the child as if it were the parents' income. It makes no difference that the child received the unearned income from a gift made prior to 1987, or that someone other than the child's parents established the gift (either before or after 1987). The tax rate is what the parents' tax would have been if the child's net unearned income were added to the parents' taxable income. Thus, the child's income could be subject to the five-percent surcharge imposed by the phase-out of the lower-bracket tax rate and personal exemption.

The amount of unearned income that a child under 14 is taxed on is equal to the amount of unearned income less the sum of $400 and the greater of the following: $500 of the standard deduction of $500 of itemized deductions; the amount of allowable deduction directly connected



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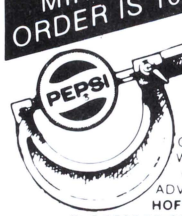

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with the production of the unearned income.

Thus a child may have effectively up to $1,000 a year or more of unearned income if allowable deductions exceed $500 before the income is taxed at the parents' rates. With respect to a child's earned income and the first $500 of taxable unearned income, it is taxed to the child at the child's marginal tax rates.

In the case of divorced parents, the rate imposed will be that of the custodial parent. In the event of married parents filing separately, the rate imposed will be that of the parent with the greater taxable income.

Investment accounts of children younger than 14 should be reviewed for appreciation. Parents may want to consider taking the gains in 1986 and investing the proceeds in Series EE U.S. Savings Bonds, municipals, the internal cash build-up of insurance policies, etc.

Presumably, income received by a child under the age of 14 from a Clifford trust established before March 2, 1986, will be taxed to the child under the prohibitions of under-14-child tax rules until the child turns 14. If a child turns 14 before the close of the tax year, the cheaper tax rules for children 14 and older apply.

Here's some advice:

Give the child growth stock that pays little in the way of dividends. When the child reaches 14, the stock can be sold, and if a profit results, the profit will be taxed at the child's rate rather than the parents' rate.

Give the child a Series EE U.S. Savings Bond that matures after the child reaches 14. The child will not have to pay tax until the bond is cashed, and the income will be taxed at the child's low tax bracket. Be careful, because this strategy will not work if a child already owns EE bonds and has elected to report each year's interest accrued as income (though this is rare).

If you can, employ your child in business paying the child a reasonable

salary. If the child were employed in 1987, the simple standard deduction (zero-bracket amount) would shelter $2,450 of income, giving the parent at the same time a deduction for wages. This must be a real job, no no-shows.

Finally, on the 1987 income tax return, parents must report the Social Security numbers of each dependent claimed over the age of five. If necessary, you must apply now for Social Security numbers for the young ones. (TRA'86 Section 152.)

Another look at Form 1099

The bad news is that the Internal Revenue Service continues its assault on operators. It is the IRS's position that the accounts (locations) of operators are non-compliers. Put another way, the government doesn't think our accounts report all of their income. I am not aware that the government views operators the same way.

Nevertheless, the IRS definitely is attempting to use operators against their accounts. As discussed in previous "Tax Tips" columns, the issue revolves around the definition of the relationship between operators and accounts and of the income resulting from that relationship.

Commissions, rents, and leasing all would tend to support the position of the IRS. That is to say (IRC Section 6041) that anyone engaged in a trade or business *who makes payments* totaling $600 or more in the course of his trade or business during a calendar year to any *non-corporate* recipient is required to report those payments to the IRS and to furnish a statement of those payments to the recipient. In addition, recipients of large amounts of cash (more than $10,000 in a single transaction) by virtue of their trade or business operations are required to file information returns also.

My position looks at another possibility: if you have a written agreement that specifically identifies the situation as either a joint venture or revenue sharing. In absence of a written agreement the facts and circumstances may also justify this position.

By definition, in order to have a joint venture, profit sharing is essential but not the sharing of losses (IRC Section 761). If you can make an agreement that you merely share machine revenues, and do not make a payment, you've got the essentials you need to fight (assuming you don't ever use the words rent, commission, or lease payments).

Under ideal circumstances, if you do not have a written agreement, upon opening of the coin box, you would make a cash split on the spot. This argument is diminished, but not totally eliminated, if you take all the cash and either give a check or mail a check.

In arguing that you have a joint venture, you have by definition a loosely formed partnership. "A partnership includes not only common-law partnership, but also syndicates, groups, pools, joint ventures; etc. through or by means which any business, financial operation, or venture is carried on, and that do not classify as trusts, corporations, or estates (IRC Section 761)." A joint venture can exist by and between corporations, partnerships, and sole proprietorships.

If a joint venture is a pseudo-partnership, can you avoid being treated as a partnership for federal income-tax purposes? The answer is yes. "An unincorporated organization may, if all its members consent, elect to be excluded from being treated as a partnership for federal income-tax purposes if it is availed of: 1. for investment purpose only and not for the active conduct of business or 2. for the joint production, extraction, or use of property, but not for the purpose of selling services or property produced or extracted. The exclusion may apply only if the income of the members of the organization can be adequately determined without the computation of partnership taxable income."

By now you must be asking what this is all about. The answer is simple: If you classify your relationship with your account as a joint venture, each of you has a responsibility to report income separately without regard to the other entity. Both of you have this responsibility separately. So, if you report your share of the split as your gross revenue, you have lived up to the letter and spirit of the law. Notice here that I referred to your end of the split as your gross receipts. If you report the entire income less the amount paid to the other joint venturer, it only obscures your argument. Also, I advise you to have your attorney check the joint-venture laws of your state.

For those of you who have a clear-cut responsibility to report this income to the IRS, you must do so no later than February 2 to the recipient and March 2 to the government. If you don't, you are subject to a penalty of $50 for each return not filed with a maximum for any calendar year of $50,000. The government also can assess an additional penalty for intentional disregard or negligence.

For larger operators who are required to mail out 50 or more 1099s in any one year, you will be required to supply this information to the IRS on "magnetic media." Procedures have been published for doing so for tax year 1986 on 5 1/2-inch data diskettes (Rev. Proc. 86-32 IRB. 196-32, 61). The requirement also applies to those who file more than 500 forms involving reports of other income.

In written articles on technical matters, the rules and conditions may be oversimplified. This is not the intention, but to provide knowledge so that you may discuss these matters with your tax professional. Some of the most famous tax blunders have occurred when taxpayers did not understand all the rules and

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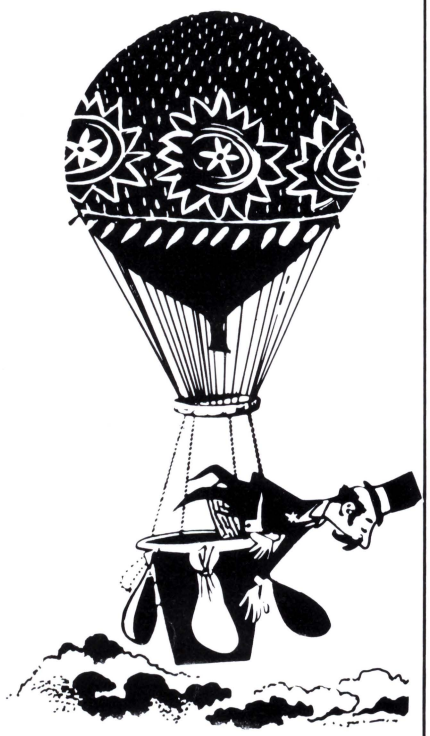

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conditions that applied to a specific situation. And, in some cases, blunders have been made because of poor advice from tax professionals.

Rulings hot off the press

Business deductions: A taxpayer could not treat his distributive share of a limited partnership's pre-opening expenses as a deductible expense for the production of income. [JK Johnsen, CA-6, 86-2 USTC 9534, TC, 83TC103]

This ruling overturned the Tax Court holding that pre-opening expenses that were not deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses (Section 162 IRC) could be deducted as expenses incurred in the production of income.

Casualty losses: A taxpayer whose car was damaged in an accident could not deduct as a casualty loss the cost of renting a car in order to commute to work [TC Memo 1986-182]. The cost was not a loss of property within the meaning of the statute [Section 165(c)(3)]. It may otherwise still be deductible as a business expense, however, if a car is essentially part of the job requirement (eg., outside sales, collector, etc.).

The IRS has attempted to disallow claims in which a taxpayer elects not to notify an insurance carrier of a loss. Under the new Internal Revenue Code of 1986 you will specifically be excluded from a deduction unless reimbursement is requested from the insurance carrier.

Court costs: The reasonableness of actions taken by the IRS at the administrative level must be taken into account in an award of litigation costs to a prevailing taxpayer in a tax case against the IRS (TC Memo 1985-27). The court rejected the IRS' contention that only the reasonableness of the government's position taken after litigation had begun controlled an award of costs.

Information returns: An employer must report a deceased employee's accrued wages and vacation pay that are paid to the estate or the person entitled to receive the payment. The payments must be reported on Form 1099 Misc as non-employee compensation(Rev. 86-109 IRB 1986-37, 141) The payments are not considered wages for purposes of collection of income taxes or for Social Security tax (FICA) purposes. The entire amount of death benefits from a qualified plan paid to an estate should be reported on Form 1099R.

Computers: A taxpayer was not allowed to deduct the cost of purchasing a personal computer from his employer, even though he estimated that he would use the computer 60 percent for business purposes (IRS letter Ruling 8629060, 4-24-86). The taxpayer failed the "convenience of the employer" test since he was not required to purchase the personal computer in order to properly perform the duties of his job.

Penalties: The IRS may not impose a fraud penalty against a taxpayer who had filed tax-protester returns solely on the basis that he had been criminally convicted for failure to file a tax return (J.B. Kotmair, 86TC). The mere failure to file a return, standing alone, is insufficient to support a fraud penalty. Although the failure to file may be considered in conjunction with other facts, there must also be other facts in order to establish fraudulent intent.

Jeffrey Rosenthal, E.A., is an operator and a tax accountant. He can be reached by writing M&J Tax Service, Ltd., 1967 Bath Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11214, or calling (718) 232-0342.

Billboard® TOP TEN

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HOT 100

TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. HUMAN	THE HUMAN LEAGUE A&M/VIRGIN 2861/A&M
2. AMANDA	BOSTON MCA 52756
3. TRUE BLUE	MADONNA SIRE 7-28591/WARNER BROS.
4. YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME	BON JOVI MERCURY 884 953-7/POLYGRAM
5. TAKE ME HOME TONIGHT	EDDIE MONEY COLUMBIA 38-06231
6. WORD UP	CAMEO ATLANTA ARTISTS 884 933-7/POLYGRAM
7. THE NEXT TIME I FALL	PETER CETERA WITH AMY GRANT WARNER BROS. 7-28597
8. HIP TO BE SQUARE	HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS CHRYSALIS 43065
9. THE WAY IT IS	BRUCE HORNSBY & THE RANGE RCA 5023
10. LOVE WILL CONQUER ALL	LIONEL RICHIE MOTOWN 1866

ADULT CONTEMPORARY

TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. LOVE WILL CONQUER ALL	LIONEL RICHIE MOTOWN 1866
2. THE NEXT TIME I FALL	PETER CETERA WITH AMY GRANT WARNER BROS. 7-28597
3. THE WAY IT IS	BRUCE HORNSBY & THE RANGE RCA 5023
4. HUMAN	THE HUMAN LEAGUE A&M/VIRGIN 2861/A&M
5. TRUE BLUE	MADONNA SIRE 7-28591/WARNER BROS.
6. I'LL BE OVER YOU	TOTO COLUMBIA 38-06280
7. LOVE IS FOREVER	BILLY OCEAN JIVE 1-9540/ARISTA
8. COMING AROUND AGAIN	CARLY SIMON ARISTA 1-9525
9. EMOTION IN MOTION	RIC OCASEK GEFFEN 7-28617/WARNER BROS.
10. CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'	THE BEACH BOYS CAPITOL 5630

COUNTRY

TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. YOU'RE STILL NEW TO ME	MARIE OSMOND WITH PAUL DAVIS CAPITOL/CURB 5613/CAPITOL
2. TOUCH ME WHEN WE'RE DANCING	ALABAMA RCA 5003-7
3. SHE USED TO BE SOMEBODY'S BABY	LARRY, STEVE, RUDY: THE GATLIN BROTHERS COLUMBIA 38-06252
4. IT AIN'T COOL TO BE CRAZY ABOUT YOU	GEORGE STRAIT MCA 52914
5. AT THE SOUND OF THE TONE	JOHN SCHNEIDER MCA 52901
6. HELL AND HIGH WATER	T GRAHAM BROWN CAPITOL 5621
7. TOO MUCH IS NOT ENOUGH	BELLAMY BROTHERS WITH THE FORESTER SISTERS MCA/CURB 52917/MCA
8. DADDY'S HANDS	HOLLY DUNN MTM 72075/CAPITOL
9. MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS	HANK WILLIAMS, JR. WARNER/CURB 7-28581/WARNER BROS.
10. GIVE ME WINGS	MICHAEL JOHNSON RCA 14412

DANCE DISCO

TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. DON'T LEAVE ME THIS WAY	THE COMMUNARDS MCA 23665
2. I CAN'T TURN AROUND	J.M. SILK RCA 5702-1-RD
3. NAIL IT TO THE WALL (REMIX)	STACY LATTISAW MOTOWN 4563MG
4. WORD UP	CAMEO ATLANTA ARTISTS 884 933-1/POLYGRAM
5. WORLD DOMINATION (REMIX)	THE BELLE STARS MCA 23671
6. BRAND NEW LOVER	DEAD OR ALIVE EPIC 49--05965
7. ONE STEP (REMIX)	K.T.P. MERCURY 888 160-1/POLYGRAM
8. MORE THAN PHYSICAL (REMIX)	BANANARAMA LONDON 886 080-1/POLYGRAM
9. SOMEBODY (REMIX)/THE RED, RED GROOVY	BRILLIANT ATLANTIC 0-86771
10. TRUE BLUE (REMIX)	MADONNA SIRE 0-20533/WARNER BROS.

Second Chance, Skill Crane

SMS Manufacturing has introduced the *Second Chance* video poker game and the solid-state *Skill Crane*.

Operators can choose from among these built-in *Second Chance* features: a raise feature, two double-up games, all or half-play hi-lo features, different minimum hands, and others designed to promote player interaction. Players can throw away five poor cards and receive five new ones without costing them any additional points.

The *Skill Crane* has multiple skill features, an adjustable claw grip, complete music/sound and light packages, and chase lights over a mirrored header.

Available with both button and joystick modes to accommodate operators in all areas of the country, the crane comes with prize-detection meters and an unauthorized-intrusion sensor with an audible alarm.

For more information, write SMS Manufacturing Corp., 1000 Airport Road, Lakewood, NJ 08701, or call 1-800/221-0138 [in New Jersey call (201) 370-3030].

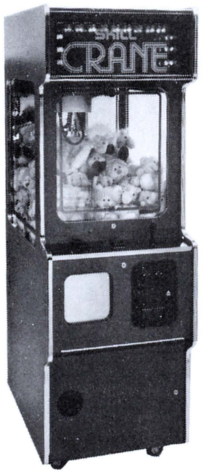
Super Chexx

Innovative Concepts in Entertainment has added special features to its original *Chexx* game to produce *Super Chexx*.

The new model has high-tech graphics, an unbreakable player shaft to eliminate replacement of figures, an improved ice-surface material and design, and flashing goal lights. New scoreboard features include shots-on-goal indicators, a running-time clock, fluorescent lighting, and no fan requirement.

Super Chexx also has a taller base for improved visibility.

For more information, write Innovative Concepts in Entertainment, Inc., 590 Young St., Tonawanda, NY 14150, or call 1-800/342-3433 (outside New York) or (716) 693-9535.



Fortune Rotary Merchandiser

Coin-It Companies has added the *Fortune Rotary Merchandiser* to its line of Fortune Cranes from Holland.

The rotary model has plug-in modular electronics for optionals and service, two coin entries, a mechanical coin meter, and a "revise" button to change the position of the disk during play.

Available in red or blue, it plays melody sounds during each play and once every four minutes. An optional credit accumulator module holds up to nine credits with a display. A large central prize chute accommodates various prize sizes.

For more information, write Coin-It Companies, 4380 N.W. 72nd Ave., Miami, Fl 33166, or call (305) 593-5111.

Power Drive, Strange Science

Bally Midway has introduced *Power Drive*, a three-player dedicated video with a continuous buy-in feature and three separate coin slots, and

Strange Science, another in its line of "Next Trend" pinball games.

Power Drive players choose from three different vehicles and can participate in 52 racing events, each named after a different city and state. Vehicles include Daddy's Girl, a Corvette; Captain Crush, a pick-up truck; and Sheriff Perry, a jeep. Each is mounted on a high chassis and has oversized wheels characteristic of the monster truck sport.

Players can shift from two-wheel to four-wheel drive during game play. Vehicles are propelled by players alternately hitting dual power buttons. In addition, a "wheelie" button helps players master certain events. There is no steering wheel.

Each event has a "dollar" award instead of points for first, second, and third place, as well as bonuses. Players can keep accumulated earnings when buying-in to continue the game.

Strange Science offers full playfield Mylar, buy-in features, self-percentaging, and manual-free testing in a science-themed pinball.

The multi-ball feature allows players to play up to five balls at once, and a "power saver" enables them to kick a draining ball back to the playfield. Players control the two-level lane changer, and the "atomic generator" builds voltage for higher scores and faster sounds.

For more information, write Bally Midway Manufacturing Co., 10601 W. Belmont Ave., Franklin Park, IL 60131, or call (312) 451-9200.

Riviera Claw

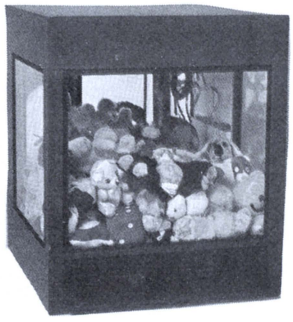
Riviera Industrial Manufacturing has introduced the *Riviera Claw* line of cranes, including single, double, triple models, and a countertop.

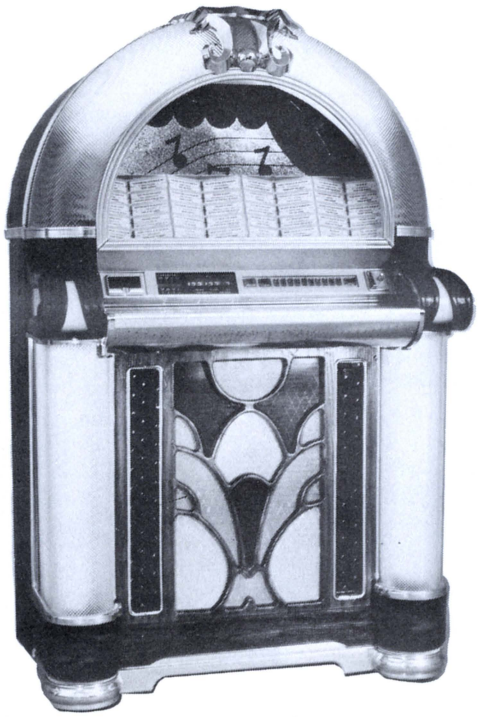
Riviera's extra-large viewing area holds a large quantity of prizes. It has locking, heavy duty wheels, an adjustable claw, a tilt alarm, and an optional joystick.

Other features include a dual coin mechanism, coin-in and prize meters, a one-year replacement-parts warranty, and 24-hour parts service.

The single crane, at 31 inches wide, 31 inches deep, and 76 inches high, is designed to fit through any standard doorway.

For more information, write Riviera Industrial Manufacturing Corp., 8384 Garden Road, Riviera Beach, FL 33404, or call (305) 842-8209.





Nostalgia jukebox

Rock-Ola has introduced the *Nostalgia* 160-selection jukebox that combines the vintage exterior of classic jukeboxes with 1980s interior electronics.

The *Nostalgia* uses a voltage-regulated system for accurate indexing, the "Opto-Sensor" record-selecting system, and Rock-Ola's "Accu-Trac" tone arm with a diamond stylus.

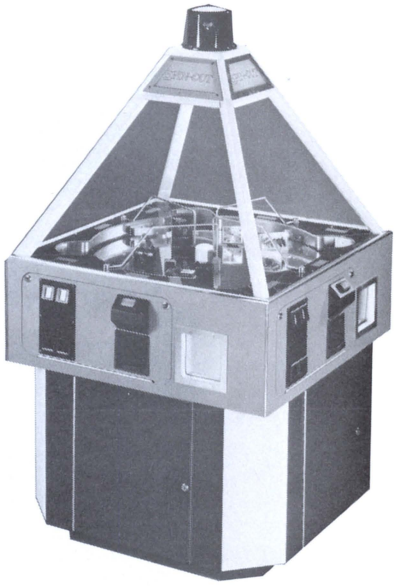
One button automatically selects the top-10 tunes, of each unit. The push-button pricing system allows operators to change prices easily. The *Nostalgia* also gives a counting of weekly and cumulative income, is front-serviceable, and has a self-contained diagnostic system for simplified electronic servicing.

Accessories include a dollar-bill validator, a microphone kit, remote volume

control, wall boxes, and converter kits. The front doors are handcrafted in Mexico.

For more information, write Rock-Ola Manufacturing Corp., 313 S. Rohlwing Road, Addison, IL 60101, or call (312) 629-9200.

Spin-Out



Game Masters has introduced *Spin Out*, a four-player rotary merchandiser that comes with a spare player-station circuit board for instant repair.

Spin Out can be adjusted for different skill levels and has an adjustable nudge control. It is made in the U.S.A. with all parts available in most cities.

Features include a prize-win meter, microprocessor-controlled player stations, a fully enclosed locking cash box, and dual coin mechanisms for player stations.

A rotating, flashing red beacon indicates when a prize is won. All electronic and mechanical parts are easily accessible for quick service. There are two large internal storage compartments and easy access for prize replacement on the playfield.

If the unit is tampered with, a tilt arm immediately locks the prize doors, turns on the flashing red beacon, and sounds the alarm until an operator or attendant resets the machine.

For more information, write Game Masters, P.O. Box 956485, Duluth, GA 30136, or call (404) 233-3332.

Kick and Run

Taito America has introduced its new soccer-themed multi-player dedicated video, *Kick and Run*.

One-to-four players compete against the computer or team against team (two on each team) in international soccer tournaments using the talents of each team and individual. *Kick and Run* players choose teams from Brazil, Italy, Japan, West Germany, England, Argentina, and the U.S.A.

In addition to buttons and joysticks, the game features a foot pedal for realistic action.

For more information, write Taito America Corp., 660 Wheeling Road, Wheeling, IL 60090, or call (312) 520-9280.

Clean Sweep

Smart Industries has developed several models of its *Clean Sweep* cranes that feature a built-in credit bonus allowing players five games for four quarters or one quarter for one play.

Clean Sweep requires low maintenance, according to the distributors, because of safeguards programmed into the microprocessor. Three game programs built into the main program allow operators to choose the game best suited to a location.

Features include steel-front construction, a dual coin mechanism, a fully adjustable claw, and joystick control.

Optional features include a dollar-bill acceptor, a prize-counter meter, a winner light, a ticket dispenser, and a sound system. Available models are a single or "super single" unit and two- or three-claw units.

For more information, write Smart Industries Corp., Mfg. 1801 Bell Ave., Des Moines, IA 50315, (515)244-3500, or its

national distributor, Central Distributing Co., Inc., 3814 Farnam St., Omaha, NE 68131, (402)553-5300.

Pin Bot, Tic Tac Strike

Williams Electronics has introduced its robotic pinball, *Pin Bot*, and its latest shuffle alley, *Tic Tac Strike*.

Pin Bot features a new sound system with robot-like speech; a light bar on top of the backbox that flashes and pulses with play, and intricate graphics on the backglass.

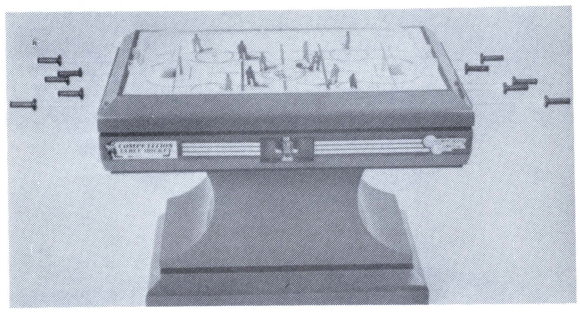
The game sets the challenge at the start by selecting one of several planets as the player's destination with skill shots all along the journey. Hitting a flashing light-bar target on the chest panel on the first shot, or completing all the lights on the panel, opens the robot's visor to reveal two eye-eject holes for two-ball play.

When making the ramp shot, over or under, players can use a lane-change feature that rotates the extra-ball light on the last ball if the first two drained quickly.

Tic Tac Strike features nine frames. Each strike earns 300 points and lights one square on a tic-tac grid; each spare earns 100 points. When three strikes light up a vertical, horizontal, or diagonal row on the grid, a 900-point bonus is added to enable a possible top score of 9,900.

Four other shuffle-alley games may be played also. All game adjustments, diagnostics, and bookkeeping functions are easily accessible from the front door.

For more information, write Williams Electronics Games, Inc., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, Il 60618, or call (312) 267-2240.



Competition Table Hockey

Championship Games has introduced *Competition Table Hockey*, a two- or four-player game with a puck-centering mechanism and no "dead areas" on the playing surface.

Competition Table Hockey is housed in a Lexan-domed cabinet from which parts and playing surfaces may be removed easily. The game has a positive player-drive mechanism for better control.

Special features include durable, balanced men with clutch for maximum maneuverability; non-deformable rods; and "easy-grip" control handles for finger-tip or wrist movement. The game is 54 1/2 inches long, 34 1/2 inches wide, and 47 inches high. All parts are mechanical.

For more information, write Championship Games, Inc., P.O. Box 325, Portland, OR 97205, or call (503) 222-9553.

Hollywood Cranes

Hollywood Crane Merchandisers has introduced a line of cranes with double-door high-security redemption chutes, illuminated control panels, double-strength tempered glass, and joystick operation.

Models include the *Casablanca*, *Fun Shop*, *Monster Crane*, and original *Hollywood Crane*. All have metal inner construction and carry a one-year or 40,000-plays factory warranty on all moving parts.

One-door entry, chaser lights, locking casters, and a win cycle with a win meter are standard. The *Casablanca* has a solid-oak finish, and the *Fun Shop* and *Monster Crane* have rustic finishes. The original *Hollywood Crane* has wrap-around four-sided viewing and glow-in-the-dark graphics that make it suitable for nightclub locations. Four-sided viewing also is available on the *Fun Shop* and *Monster Crane*.

Options include Rowe $1 and $5 bill acceptors, a gumball dispenser, and an on-field service kit.

For more information, write or call Hollywood Crane Merchandisers, Inc., 8044 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91605, (818) 767-0981 (West Coast); or 1122 Ninth St., Altoona, PA 16601, (814) 946-4040 (East Coast).

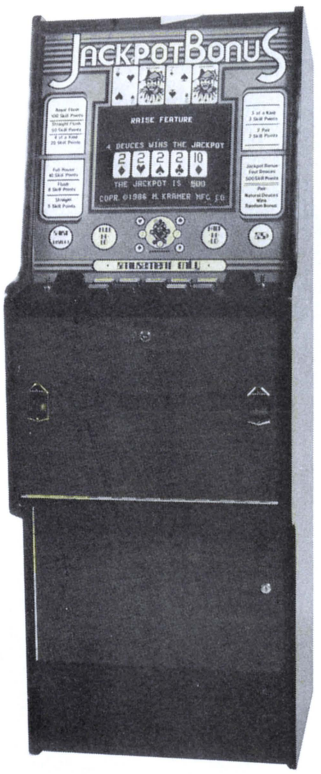
Jackpot Bonus

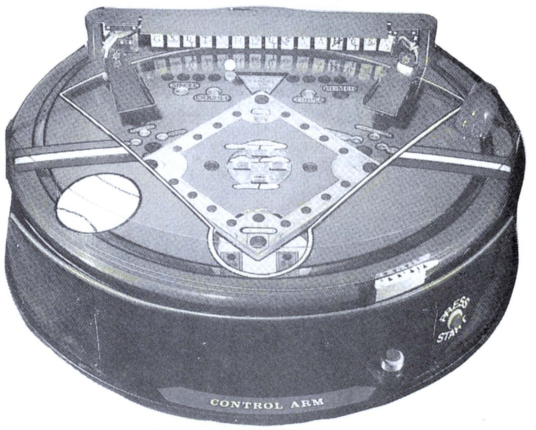
M. Kramer Manufacturing has introduced *Jackpot Bonus*, an instant double-bonus video poker game.

Jackpot Bonus players can win an instant random bonus on every hand played on a pair of deuces, or players can hit the Jackpot Bonus on a winning hand of four deuces.

Among other features are a wide range of difficulty levels, a raise feature, half- or full-play hi-low, auto-play, and a bill acceptor. The game is for amusement only and may not be approved in all parts of the country.

For more information, write M. Kramer Mfg. Co., 1100 Towbin Ave., Lakewood, NJ 08701, or call (201) 367-7810.





Grand Baseball

Grand Products has added *Grand Baseball* to its Velocity Ball system of novelty games.

Velocity Ball is a patented concept using circular playfields with game balls propelled by air power along a track. When the ball reaches the "hit" position, players must direct the control arm and press a trigger to aim balls at selected targets.

Grand Baseball is a single player game using baseball action and a challenging ramp that increases chances of scoring.

All Velocity Ball system games are available as dedicated units or conversion kits. The current system includes *Four Kings* and *Thunder Drome*. All units are interchangeable.

For more information, write Grand Products, Inc., 775 Nicholas Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007, or call (312) 593-2770.

Goldigger, Midway Cranes

Funtek has introduced a line of redemption merchandisers with its *Goldigger* mini-crane and *Midway* single crane.

The *Goldigger* may be a countertop unit or a cabaret model on a base. It has a highly sensitive adjustable claw that can pick up small items such as costume jewelry, digital watches, golf balls, and perfume bottles.

The *Midway* can display a large quantity of prizes and features a claw and head assembly designed for a wide range of sensitivity adjustment and easy prize accessibility. It

also has plug-in components to reduce or eliminate down time and service problems.

Both models are made in the U.S. of all-metal cabinets with options including ticket dispensers and joysticks.

Funtek also plans a new redemption merchandising *Laser Gun* to be introduced at year's end.

For more information, write Funtek, Inc., 405 Caredean Drive, Horsham, PA 19044, or call (215) 674-1011.

720 Degrees

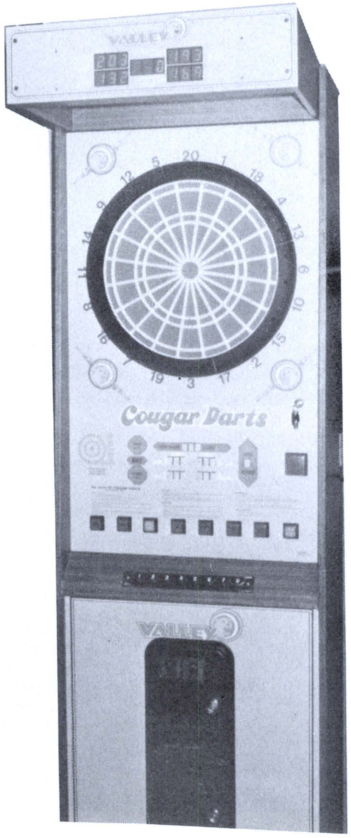
Atari Games has developed the first skateboard-themed game in the dedicated one-or-two player video *720 Degrees.*

The cabinet includes a 25-inch monitor and eight-inch speakers. Custom music scores, sound effects and speech, and animation enhance the game, in which players portray a skater who must earn the right to compete in city skateparks and win the title of skating world champion.

Play begins with the player in the middle of Skate City. All surfaces can be skated on, and the player earns tickets for performing skillful maneuvers. Tickets allow entry into one of the skateparks where the player competes against the clock for gold, silver, or bronze medals. "Cash" prizes are awarded to a skater if he qualifies for a medal.

After the skatepark competition, the game returns to the city for more street-style skating and numerous hazards along the way.

Players use "cash" winnings to buy skating equipment, including boards, helmets, shoes, and pads for more skillful moves.



Player controls consist of a rotary control that allows full circular and directional movement. A kick button keeps the player skating; a jump button is used for aerial stunts.

720 Degrees features 20 different skateparks, including a downhill, jump park, ramp, and slalom. It also has an add-a-coin feature that lets players continue the action from their previous game. Players can select from among 10 class levels as they progress through the game.

Atari is offering promotional items for the game, including adult and children's T-shirts and a "soundcard" record sheet with the original game soundtrack. Promotional items may be ordered from Atari customer service by calling (408) 434-3950.

For more information, write Atari Games Corp., 675 Sycamore Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035, or call (408) 434-3748. *(Game pictured in Players' Picks column.)*

Valley Cougar Darts, Valley Royal Dartes

The Valley Company has entered the electronic darts market with *Valley Cougar Darts*, featuring an American-sized target, and *Valley Royal Dartes*, featuring an international-sized target.

Design features include a giant overhead high-density LED player-score display in team/league format, a front upper panel that swings open for service access or to remove broken darts without pulling the unit away from the wall.

The games also have an

automatic instant advance to the next player position after three darts are thrown, an automatic "one-dart-out" calculator and display, a league-mode selector, a tip-saving "missed throw" dart catcher ring, a "Tru-Score" single high-speed microprocessor, and compatibility with any soft-tipped dart weighing up to 30 grams.

Players can select from 10 games: 301, 301 Double-In, 301 Double-Out, 301 Masters-Out, 501, 501 Double-In, 501 Double-Out, 501 Masters-Out, Hi Score, and Shanghai.

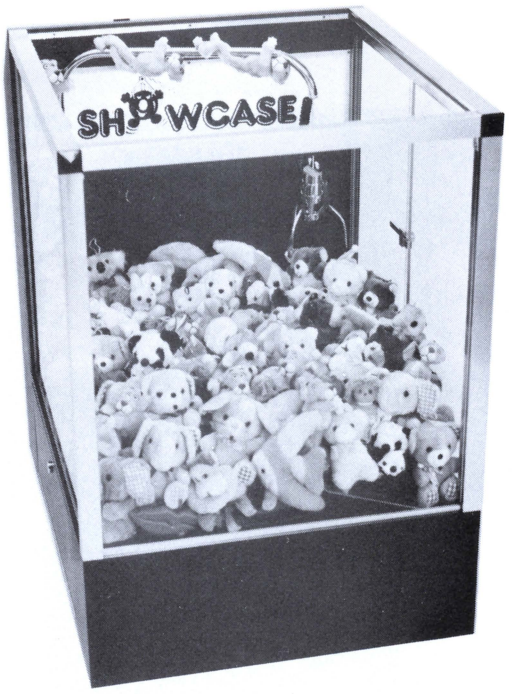
In addition, the games have a steel double-slot/double-door coin mechanism with a large coin box; resilient fiber-filled nylon target segments, software and hardware plug-in capability for a dollar-bill acceptor, a self-test diagnostic mode, and a patented selectable double bull's-eye.

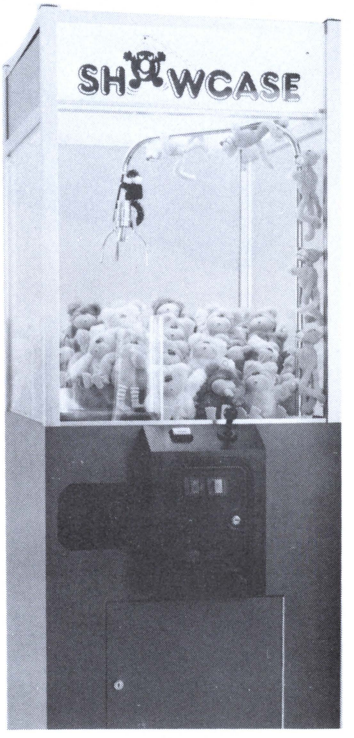
For more information, write The Valley Company, 333 Morton St., Bay City, MI 48706, or call (517) 892-4536.

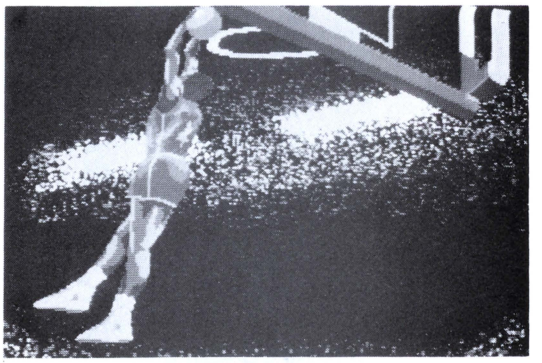
Showcase Cocktail Crane, Deluxe Mini Single

Showcase, Inc., has added the *Cocktail Crane* and the *Deluxe Mini Single* to its line of redemption merchandisers.

The cocktail model is available in silver and black for bars, nightclubs, and restaurants and in burlwood for convenience stores and other street locations. It operates with a two-way joystick and is 27 inches wide, 36 inches deep, and 39 1/2 inches high.







Safety tempered glass surrounds the unit, which features a "stir and mix" system of baffles that gives a good look at the plush toys and other items inside. Prizes rotate on a platform.

The mini unit is 27 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and 73 inches high. It also has a joystick and the same display platform as the cocktail model.

Other Showcase cranes include a deluxe single and double crane games with carousels and interchangeable marquees.

For more information, write Showcase, Inc., P.O. Box 34085, Sarasota, FL 33580, or call toll free 1-800/642-7263; in Florida or after hours call (813) 355-8667.

Double Dribble, WEC Le Mans

Konami has debuted two dedicated videos in the basketball-themed *Double Dribble*, a two-player game with a continuation feature; and the driving game *WEC Le Mans*, which is available in three models.

At the start of *Double Dribble* the player names his team, listens to the national anthem, then uses an eight-way joystick and three buttons to control the ball for the offense. The player must dribble, shoot, pass, free throw, and try for a slam dunk. A successful slam dunk is shown in show motion and a zoom shot.

There are five different styles of the slam dunk feature. Free throw statistics are maintained, and referees blow whistles and announce fouls from the sidelines. A

cheerleading squad and team mascot also appear. At the end of each quarter there is a challenge shootout for extra time.

WEC Le Mans comes in upright, mini-spin, and spin-type versions. Player controls include a steering wheel, gear shift, accelerator, and brake.

The spin-type car simulator jumps up and down, turns back and forth, and spins up to 180 degrees. Players must use all the controls to excel in the 24-hour endurance championship.

Players experience the day and night driving of an actual 24-hour race. They must negotiate hills and curves and counter-steer to avoid spin-outs.

The minispin version reacts to the action of the steering wheel but does not spin up to 180 degrees. The upright model offers the same graphics and game play as the other models.

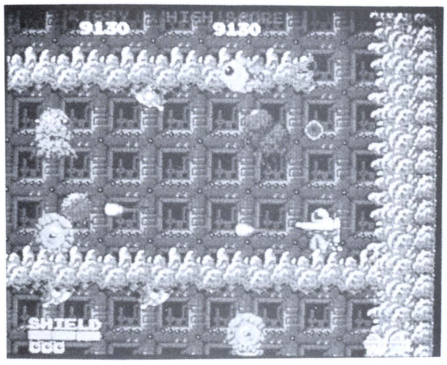
For more information, write Konami, Inc., 815 Mittel Drive, Wood Dale, Il 60191, or call (312) 595-1443.

Alien Sector

The Game Exchange has introduced to the U.S. a space-themed adventure game from Namco entitled *Alien Sector*. The one-player game is a universal horizontal-monitor conversion kit.

Game play is set on the once-peaceful planet of Paccet, which has been captured by mystery creatures led by the evil Octy. Armed with a wave cannon and shield, the player's goal is to attack Octy's underground fortress and save the planet.

The *Alien Sector* kit comes complete with PC board, a plexiglass header and marquee,



decals, a control-panel overlay, a wiring harness, a joystick, buttons, and an installation manual.

For more information, write The Game Exchange, exclusive distributors of the game, at P.O. Box 09598, Columbus, OH 43209-0598, or call 1/800-848-0110 (in Ohio, (614) 258-2933).

UFO Robo Dangar

Nichibutsu has introduced *UFO Robo Dangar*, a space adventure conversion kit for vertical monitors.

UFO Robo Dangar players undertake a mission to command the Robo Dangar to victory against the forces of dark space. Along the way players meet strange weapons of destruction, including colossal mechanical dinosaurs. Players must seek out the Black Hole to enter other dimensions. Action includes fighting Battle-Star ships hidden in the enemy's hangar, destruction of the hangar, and docking with giant UFOs. Mission failure allows evil to dominate space forever.

The kit comes complete with PC board, marquee, control-panel overlay, instruction card, control stickers, buttons, switches, eight-way joystick, wiring harness, and service manual. It has a continue mode for play appeal.

For more information, write Nichibutsu U.S.A., 15737 S. Garfield Ave., Unit 18, Paramount, CA 90723, or call (213) 408-0515.

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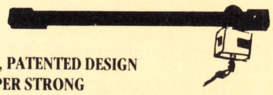

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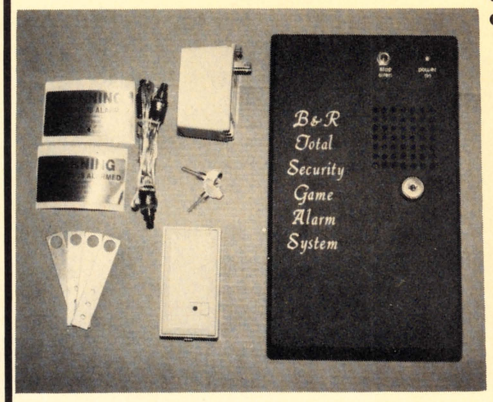

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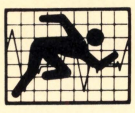

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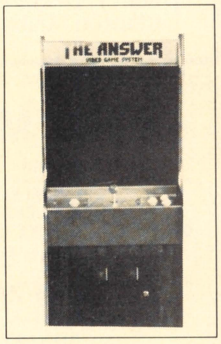

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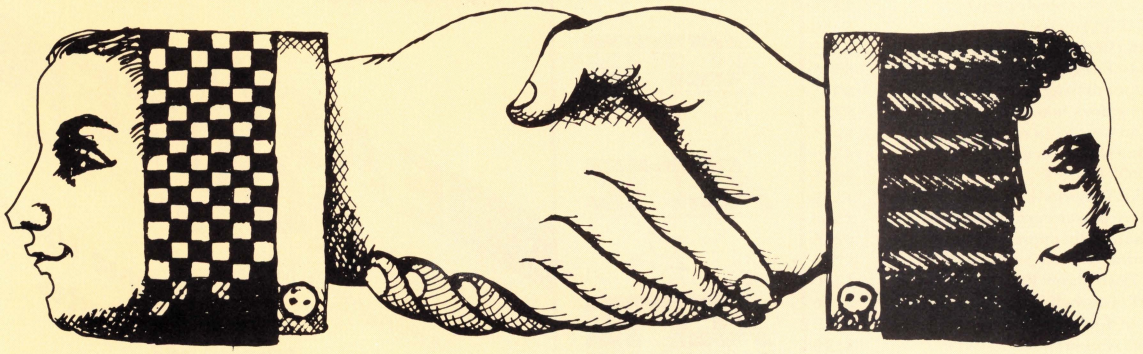

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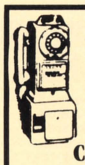

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